

Dregoth Ascending

:: Part II ::



MP

~The Quest~

a DarkSun adventure by athas.org for characters of levels 13-17

Dregoth Ascending

Part II: The Quest

Version 1.1

A Dark Sun adventure for characters of levels 13-17.

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In order to play Part II of *Dregoth Ascending*, you will need the *Dark Sun 3 Core Rules* and *Terrors of Athas*, available as free downloads from the official Dark Sun site, www.athas.org, as well as *The Dungeon Master Guide*, *Player's Handbook*, *Monster Manual*, and the *Expanded Psionics Handbook*. The DM is encouraged to read the *Dark Sun Revised Campaign Setting*, *City by the Silt Sea*, *Veiled Alliance* and *Elves of Athas*. These products contain additional information the DM can use to enhance the adventure. *Dregoth Ascending* is set in Free Year 12.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Dregoth the Undead Dragon-King has been traveling the planes of existence for nearly 2,000 years ever since his discovery of the *planar gate*, a Green Age artifact found in the caverns beneath Giustenal. During his travels Dregoth discovered the presence and worshipping of actual true gods, something previously unknown to the world of Athas. For nearly two eons Dregoth studied the nature of gods, their incredible power, and their zealous worshipers in hopes of attaining such divinity. The Dread Lord of New Giustenal traveled to countless worlds in a variety of disguises, researching hundreds of factions and cults, good and evil, to learn the true nature of gods and their devotees. Dregoth has only recently returned to Athas in the wake of the events of the *Prism Pentad*, and is now putting events in motion, hoping to become Athas's first true god.

After another two years of research, in addition to his previous study of the multiverse, Dregoth uncovered the reason why the gods of the planes have never turned their attentions towards the world of Athas. The spiritual conduits that allow the gods of other worlds to draw strength from their worshipers don't exist on Athas, and so the powers of the planes have turned away from the inhabitants since the earliest days of existence. The spiritual conduits have been replaced by elemental conduits, strongly linking the world of Athas to the elemental Inner Planes. Dregoth has theorized the presence of the Gray, the endless limbo where Athasians go when they die, is responsible; because of the Gray, spiritual conduits cannot be linked to Athas. However, the elemental conduits easily pierce the Gray, granting the elemental clerics of Athas their power.

In the end the Dread Lord's plan is a simple one: move the existing elemental conduits so they connect the Outer Planes to Athas. Once the conduits connect to the Outer Planes, Dregoth plans to travel there and receive the power bestowed upon him by his faithful. In addition, all Athasian divine spellcasters shall have to turn to Dregoth for spells since Athas would no longer be connected to the elemental Inner Planes.

To achieve this end Dregoth has created an epic *godhood* spell that will not only move the conduits, but instantly elevate him to divinity upon its completion. This spell was devised by the Dread Lord during his journey to the Outer Planes, and perfected upon his return to Athas.

THE GODHOOD SPELL

During his time on the Outer Planes and through research completed since returning to Athas, Dregoth devised a spell he believes shall allow him to achieve divinity. The *godhood* spell is an epic spell developed by Dregoth for the sole purpose of transforming him into a god. The *godhood* spell, in its current form, can only be cast to affect Dregoth, and only during a specific lunar cycle of the moons of Guthay and Ral. Additionally, the caster must understand and be able to

manipulate the ancient forces of the Pristine Tower, which the Dread King is going to use to cast the final stages of the spell. Lastly, the information on preparations, components, and how to cast the spell are all contained within Dregoth's mind and are not recorded in any other form. In other words, the odds that another sorcerer-monarch or other entity could develop and cast the spell are microscopic.

The *godhood* spell is cast in eight stages. As each stage of the spell is cast, the spell levels a divine spellcaster can prepare decrease. Any spells prepared prior to the casting are not lost, but once they're cast they cannot be prepared again for the duration of the adventure. Divine casters who try to prepare spells of a lost level meet with failure, as the level of power they can normally access from the Inner Planes can no longer pass through the elemental conduits.

Stage One: This stage is cast by Dregoth from his Dread Palace in New Giustenal just prior to the beginning of the adventure. This stage results in the loss of epic divine spells. Since none of the PCs should have attained the level needed to cast these spells, they will not feel the effects of the spell. However other epic divine spellcasters do. This stage of the spell is mostly a preparation for stages to come, cutting off higher access to the Inner Planes.

Stage Two: The second stage is one of the more critical to the spell and deals with Dregoth's invasion of Raam. This portion of the spell requires the forfeit of 10,000 Hit Dice of living beings who are not required to be worshipers of the caster. The lifeforce drained from the Raamites is used to fuel the next four stages of the spell. The completion of this stage results in the loss of 9th-level spells by all divine spellcasters of Athas.

Stage Three: This is the first of four stages of the spell that prepares Dregoth for his evolution from mortal to god, and is once again cast from the Dread Palace in New Giustenal. The energy needed to complete these stages takes the form of the former citizens of Raam, and draws energy away from the elemental conduits. The completion of this stage results in the loss of 8th-level spells. Additionally, all spells that summon creatures with the elemental type or subtypes fail in the attempt.

Stage Four: This is the second of four stages of the spell that prepare Dregoth for the evolution to godhood cast from the Dread Palace in New Giustenal. The completion of this stage results in the loss of 7th-level spells.

Stage Five: This is the third of four stages of the spell that prepare Dregoth for the evolution from mortal to god cast from the Dread Palace in New Giustenal. The completion of this stage results in the loss of 6th-level spells. In addition, all summoned elementals and elemental beasts (including paraelementals) across the face of Athas are banished back to the Inner Planes unless special circumstances rationalized by the DM apply. Artifacts and magical items that tap the Inner Planes for energy, such as a *ring of elemental command*, fail to function at the completion of this stage.

Stage Six: This is the last of the four stages cast from the Dread Palace in New Giustenal. The completion of this stage results in the loss of 5th-level spells. At the conclusion of this stage Dregoth leaves New Giustenal for the Pristine Tower to execute the final two stages, leaving High Templar Mon Adderath in charge of his underground city.

Stage Seven: This is the second to last stage of the spell designed to prepare the conduits to make the switch from the Inner to the Outer Planes upon completion of the final stage. The conclusion of this stage results in the loss of 4th-level spells and the ability to turn or rebuke undead and other creatures. Creatures with close ties to the Inner Planes, such as *drakes* and *spirits of the land*,

fall into a state of hibernation from which they'll eventually die if the elemental conduits are not restored. Depending on their timing, the PCs may have a chance to disrupt Dregoth's spell before the completion of this stage.

Stage Eight: Unless the PCs prevent the final stage of the spell from being completed by the Dread King, there is a chance the elemental conduits may be permanently damaged. This is the most critical portion of the spell, one requiring Dregoth's near undivided attention to complete. It is at this point the PCs have a chance to disturb Dregoth's casting. It is also here the PCs may have to go head to head with the mighty Champion of Rajaat.

Divine spellcasters are able to "feel" the completion of each stage of the *godhood* spell being cast as their connection with the Inner Planes becomes more defunct. A divine spellcaster can only "feel" a stage being completed if he can cast spells of a spell level that is affected, i.e. if a cleric can cast 8th level spells, he does not "feel" the spell until stage three. As Dregoth completes each stage all divine spellcasters on Athas must make a **Will save** (DC 20 + stage of *godhood* spell) or lose consciousness for 1d4x10 minutes.

SIEMHOUK'S ACCOUNT

"I had never before heard my master scream in such agony, a frightful sound I hope to never hear again. It was as if a portion of his life was being ripped away, and soon after that I felt it as well, a wrenching feeling that torn at me as if a portion of my spirit had been blasted away by the blowing sand. I don't know how long I lay unconscious, and when I awoke the Shadow King was standing above me, his eyes burning with a look somewhere between apprehension and loathing. 'Dregoth makes his move, Pandita. I go to summon the remaining Champions, and I need you to bring all the high templars to the Naggaramakam. There is much to be done.' I paused for a moment after my master vanished, for more would cost me my life despite being his favorite, and for the first time in many years I was apprehensive about what the future holds."

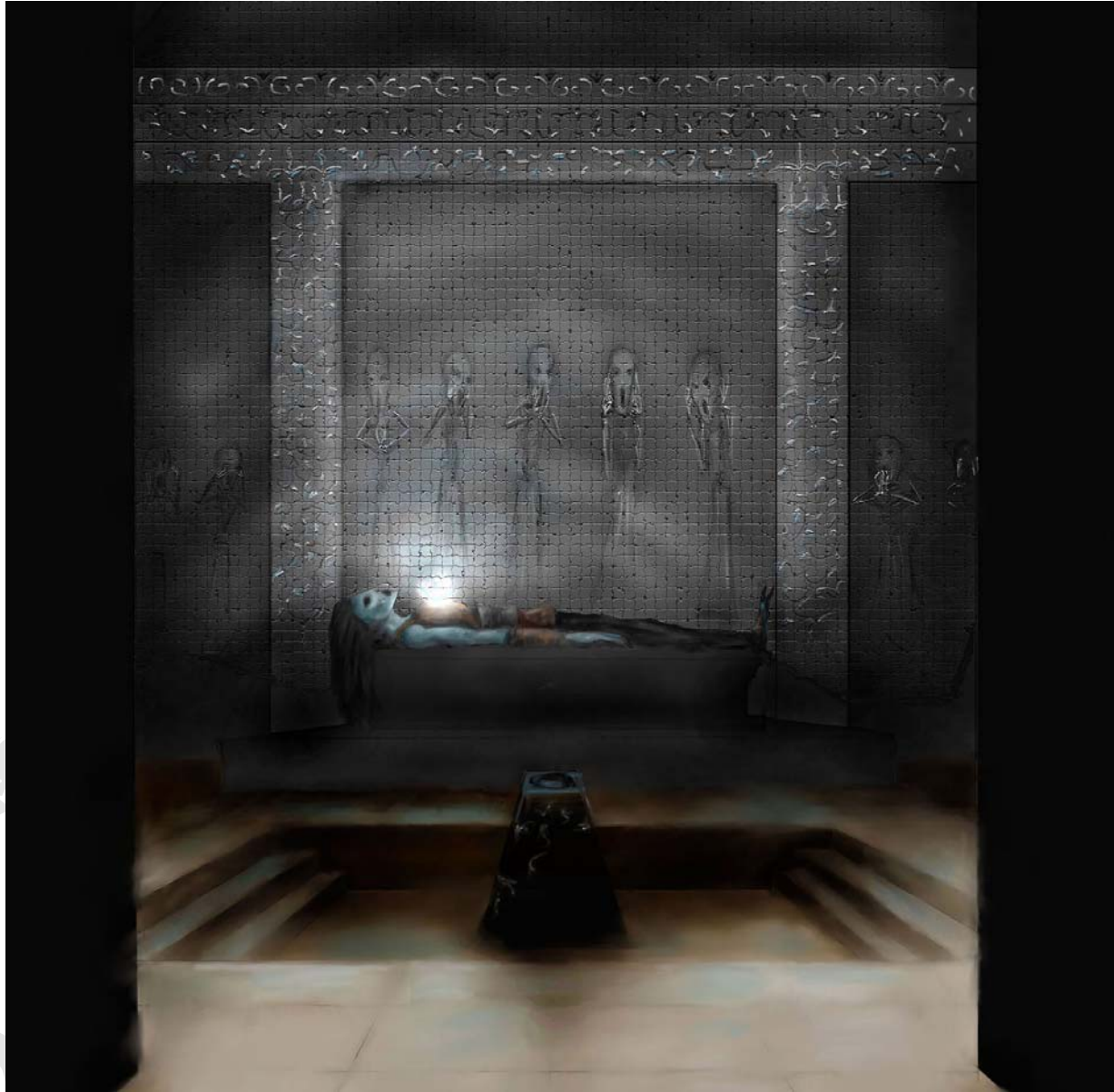
- Siemhouk the Priest Child, High Priestess of the Chamber of Air & Temple of Thought

ADVENTURE SYNOPSIS

In Part Two: *The Quest*, the PCs receive a summons by the sorcerer-monarch Nibenay in regards to Dregoth's attack and the loss of spells from the Inner Planes. The Shadow King knows of the PCs efforts during the invasion of Raam (or past efforts in previous adventures), and requires outside help of some sort if the Dread King's plans are to be thwarted. The PCs arrive in Nibenay only to be confronted by not only the Shadow-King but Hamanu of Urik and Lalali-Puy of Gulg as well. The three of them tell the PCs of Dregoth's plans for the elemental conduits and the future of Athas.

After detailing the Dread King's plan, the Champions tell the PCs how they can defeat Dregoth despite his great power, and what their reward would be for such a feat. If the party or individual PCs refuse the sorcerer-monarch's information and help, they may try to defeat Dregoth on their own, but would be easily defeated. Only with the knowledge of the Sorcerer-monarchs do the characters have any chance of defeating the Undead Dragon-King. Should the PCs agree, they're given information leading to three powerful artifacts: the *Pearl of the Sunrise Sea*, the *Star of Badna*, and the *Scorcher*. The PCs can search for the three relics in any order.

One quest takes the **PCs** back to Raam, where clues lead to the devious templar Roal, who commands the mansabdar police force. The **PCs** must be careful in their dealings with Roal, or else he will send hired mercenaries to deal with them and claim the *Star of Badna* for himself. Eventually, the **PCs** find the Consecrated Sepulcher of Badna, where the former high-templar Grogh-En rests with the artifact they are looking for. Grogh-En, now an undead being known as a Badna zombie due to the artifact's curse, is not easily killed. Unless he is finally put to rest, Grogh-En will hunt the **PCs** in what remains of the adventure to reclaim the *Star*.



Illus. by Steve Bell

Another quest leads to Balic, where the **PCs** must find the underground templar faction lead by Asthira the First Templar. Clues will lead the **PCs** to the Lazy Mekillot, an establishment run by the half-giant Mox, who there is more to than meets the eye. Mox can take the **PCs** to Asthira, who in turn can contact Andropinis regarding the location of the *Pearl of the Sunrise Sea* – if the **PCs** agree to her terms. They can get the *Pearl* if they become subjected to a *geas*, and they are warned that if they do not return the artifact, Andropinis will unleash his wrath upon them.

The third quest unfolds in the trade village of Cromlin, where the **PCs** must prove themselves to the local population. Most likely, this will be through a large fight at the Dirty Lizard tavern, where the **PCs** encounter Jaksot Han, an ex silt-pirate. Jaksot has heard of Vorr and his legendary sword, and gives the **PCs** the name of Shimmer – an old elven woman who lives with Tenpug’s Band. If the **PCs** make it to the slave tribe’s base of operations, they can learn the location of the *Scorcher* from Shimmer. It is in the Valley of Trevain, in a cave currently occupied by a large number of so-ut due to mating season.

Part II: *The Quest* ends when the **PCs** have all of the three artifacts or give up searching for them, or they run out of time. The **PCs** have 20 days to gather all three artifacts and reach New Giustenal. For every five days that pass from the **PCs** encounter the Shadow King’s messenger, Dregoth completes another stage of his *godhood* spell (3rd stage on day 5, 4th stage on day 10, 5th stage on day 15 and 6th stage on day 20). After Dregoth has completed the 6th stage, he relocates to the Pristine Tower where he will complete the *godhood* spell. If it becomes apparent that the **PCs** are not going to retrieve all three artifacts within this timeframe, they may have to confront Dregoth at the Pristine Tower with only one or two (or none) of the relics. If the **PCs** haven’t gathered the three artifacts and aren’t nearing New Giustenal by the 20th day, they will be contacted psionically by the Shadow King and told to go immediately to the Pristine Tower before Dregoth is able to complete the *godhood* spell.

The journey to New Giustenal and the Pristine Tower are detailed in Part III of *Dregoth Ascending*, the conclusion of the *Dregoth Ascending* trilogy.

1. HERALD OF NIBENAY

At some point after the dray have retreated to the Silt Sea the PCs are approached by a templar of Nibenay who bears a message from her master. The DM should let the characters take some actions following the end of the invasion, allowing them to get a grasp of and possibly influence the events described in the last section of *Part I: The Day of Light*. The PCs may even wish to snatch a portion of the city for themselves, though this may be hampered by the continuation of the adventure. When the DM wants to continue with the course of the adventure, read or paraphrase the following:

The city of Raam has survived the invasion, but at a great cost. It is quite apparent that things will never be the same. The sudden retreat of the army when the city was visibly on its knees still confuses you. Why did they retreat when victory was well within their grasp? As if in answer to your question an almost naked woman carrying an agafari staff and wearing the headdress of a templar approaches you from a parting group of people. You hear the word "Nibenay" whispered by someone behind you as the woman stops and plants her staff in the sand at your feet.

"I am Arru," she proclaims coldly, "High Templar of Nibenay. In the name of the Shadow King I bid you greetings and present you with a summons from my master to meet with him regarding recent events. My liege has heard of your efforts against the invaders, and warns that though the army is gone the future is wrought with peril. Brave ones such as you are needed to save Athas from a power greater than the Dragon ever was." It is hard not to notice the failed attempt by the templar to hide her disdain with the last statement, but without missing a beat continues, "The Shadow King has sent me here to guide you to his city, where all shall be explained behind the safe walls of the Naggaramakam. Time is short, and the sooner we begin the journey the better."

The Nibenese templar is Arru, High Priestess of the Chamber of Fire and Temple of War, and one of the Shadow King's most

treasured servants. Arru was transported to Raam by her master's magic, and she is to return to Nibenay with the PCs or at the very least some other group of PCs brave enough to do the job.

The High Templar speaks to the PCs as if the party has already accepted the mission, as she would obey her master without question regardless of their position on the matter. If the party wishes to question her on the nature of this summons or regarding the attack on Raam (or the loss of spells from the Inner Planes should the PCs be aware of it), Arru explains that any area outside the Naggaramakam is not safe from the prying eyes of their enemy, and once again insists they make their way to Nibenay post haste. Arru refuses to answer any other questions, stating that her master will answer all queries soon enough.

Arru will be far from sociable with the party, viewing the encounter as a necessary (but distasteful) duty. If pressed into conversion, the priestess presents a cold, resolute view regarding being a templar and selfishly serving the Shadow King.



If the PCs refuse the summons of the Shadow King, the DM may have to appeal to the basic nature of the characters to get them to Nibenay. This could be promises of a great reward, which is well within the power of the sorcerer-monarch. If the PCs are reluctant because of an alignment

conflict, Arru argues that the fate of all Athas is at stake, and what she calls “petty morals” is a self-serving attitude that will plunge Athas into a new, dark age where pure evil reigns supreme. That’s about all Arru dares divulge without incurring the wrath of her master.

If the PCs by all accounts refuse to go to Nibenay, the adventure cannot continue without some modification. The PCs could be approached by Nanda Shatri, Oronis of Kurn, or an advanced being known to the PCs. The entity in question will give the PCs the same information provided by the Shadow King in Encounter 5.

NAGGARAMAKAM, and urges the PCs to gather the three artifacts in order to stop Dregoth’s plans.

If the party agrees to meet with the Shadow King, Arru requests they leave immediately through the use of a *greater teleport* scroll. If the PCs refuse to let Arru teleport them, the method of reaching Nibenay is left to the party’s design. Unless they have some magical or psionic means of transportation, it’s usually a three day travel south by the main road. Arru will accompany them if they go on foot, but will be very displeased. If the PCs travel by magical or psionic means, the High Templar instructs them to appear outside the Dancing Gates. The Shadow King’s highest ranking templars shall meet them at the front gate and escort them to the safety of the Naggaramakam. Attempts at teleporting inside the city will fail automatically due to wards recently placed by the Shadow King.

If the PCs travel overland to Nibenay, they shall have to do so on foot unless they have their own mounts which they arrived in Raam on. Currently, there are no mounts of any kind for sale in the chaotic aftermath of the attack. Pausing in their travels is met with great scorn by Arru, who insists it is critical they reach Nibenay as fast as possible. The DM may run optional encounters 2. **REFUGEES** and 3. **BELGOI**.

2. REFUGEES

Several citizens who fled Raam through the northwest gate eventually turned south in an attempt to make their way towards Nibenay instead of traveling west to Urik or faraway Tyr. These people have not heard that the invading army has withdrawn from the city and it is now safe to return. Refugees can be encountered alone or in small groups consisting of family members, friends or fellow refugees traveling together. The refugees could be in need of water, food and/or healing. Some carry children and are not dressed for desert travel. The majority want to return to Raam if told it is safe to go there. There is a 10% chance that a refugee is a carrier of the Wind Sickness. The plague spreads by touch.

Disease	Infection	DC
Wind Sickness	Contact	15
Incubation	Damage	
1d4 days	1d4 Con	

3. BELGOI

As Dregoth passed through the mountains north of Break Shore he drove a tribe of belgoi from their home. Several of their number perished at the hands of the dray, and the survivors moved west in search of a new home. These vicious cannibals have since been preying on refugees from Raam. When encountered the belgoi are feasting on a small family of refugees while they’re still alive.

As you reach the top of a dune, you come to witness a band of clawed humanoids gathered in a large circle. The ringing of bells and wicked laughter accompany frenzied cheers and screams of agony from within the circle. Some of the clawed humanoids are kneeling over something in the crowd’s center. As the tallest of them rises, you spot a pair of pale human bodies covered in blood on the ground. The creature holds aloft for its peers to see, the body of a child staring

blankly, and caresses it with one clawed finger. The shouts and ringing of bells becomes frantic when the being burrows its nails into the flesh of the child. The little boy's pitched scream lasts only an instant. His mouth becomes locked wide open and his skin turns grey. Then the body is tossed to the masses, which leap at it like a pack of jhakars that haven't been fed in weeks.

The belgoi leader drained the boy of his last strength and threw the body to his tribesmen. It is too late to save the family of three killed by the belgoi, but the PCs can put an end to this threat against all the remaining fleeing Raamites. The PCs start 120 feet from the band of belgoi, should they wish to combat them.

Belgoi (30): hp 22 each
Ta'q'uat, belgoi leader: 69

4. CITY OF SPIRES

Regardless of how they reach the city, the PCs eventually arrive in Nibenay for their meeting with the Shadow King. As Arru stated to them earlier the PCs should arrive at the city's northern gate. The reason for this becomes evident the closer they approach the city.

Nibenay, also known as the City of Spires, looms before you. The ornate buildings of the ancient city that tower above the outer walls are the first sights you see. You then become aware of a shimmering luminescence surrounding the city. "My master wards the city against our common foe," explains Arru upon noticing your concern, "preventing magical and psionic travel in and out of Nibenay. We must make haste, for my king cannot maintain the shield forever."

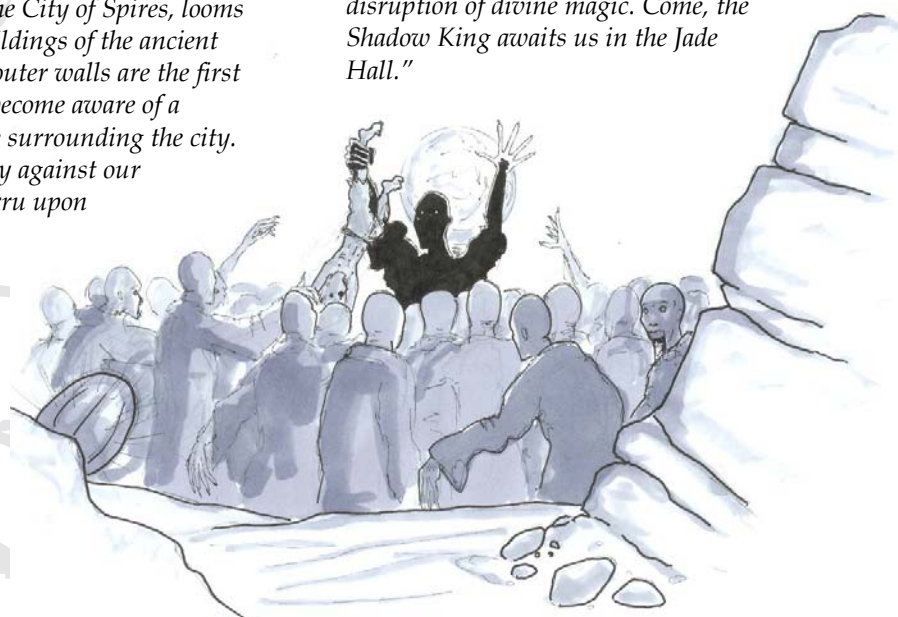
If the PCs arrive at the northern gates, read or paraphrase the following:

Quickening your approach you make your way towards the gates, where you're met by three other women dressed with the same lack of clothing as Arru. "These are the other high templars of the Shadow King," declares Arru, "Djena, enforcer of the King's Law; Rejan of the Chamber of Water; and Kahayla of the Chamber of Earth. They are here to escort you to the Naggaramakam."

The PCs should realize that this escort is a great honor. The High Templars, though, are all business here, and engage in little or no dialogue with the PCs as they walk through the city. In fact, several of the high templars resent the fact that their master does not entrust the defeat of Dregoth to them, but instead enlists the help of outsiders. This animosity is visibly conferred to the PCs with glances of hatred and malice on their journey through the city.

As you pass through Reservoir Gate, the wondrous architecture of Nibenay comes into view. Though the city is still one of the few under the rule of a sorcerer-monarch, one cannot say the condition of the city has languished. However, it is difficult to concentrate on architecture when it's visibly apparent that the city is in a state of chaos. "Many have begun to panic due to our master's protective spell," coldly states Djena, more to her fellow templars than to your party, "and some know of the recent disruption of divine magic. Come, the Shadow King awaits us in the Jade Hall."

Illus. by Mike Fleming



If the **PCs** arrive at another gate, they do not meet the remaining high templars, and Arru leads them to the Naggaramakam. Read or paraphrase the following:

The journey through the streets of Nibenay is quick under the direction of the high templar(s), and soon you find yourselves at the walls of the Naggaramakam, the walled inner city. Few besides the templar-wives of the Shadow King have seen beyond its monstrous walls and the lofty agafari trees that tower over them. As you pass through the heavily guarded gate the splendor of this forbidden subcity is not lost on you. Surrounded by small buildings and lush plant life is the palace of the Shadow King, a structure resembling a large human face with long flowing hair, which reaches the ground surrounding the building. Carved within the hair are images of thousands of females, which you've heard are rumored to be the likeness of every templar to serve the Shadow King. A steep set of stairs leads to a small entrance beneath the face's chin, and it is there you are lead by the high templars. The females you notice here regard you with a visual contempt, while the one or two males you happen to glance have the gaze focused unerringly on the ground.

The walls surrounding the Naggaramakam are 50 feet in height, totally obscuring the view of all structures inside. For any who have seen the human visage presented by the Shadow King, they'll recognize it as the face of the Naggaramakam. Any questions presented to the high templars by the **PCs** are ignored from this point forward, and they're sternly told to keep on the path up the stairs and to their meeting with the Shadow King. Remember that this complex is filled with easily a hundred of the Shadow King's templars, and any aggressive moves are met with unmerciful force. Once the **PCs** enter the opening below the face's chin, continue with Encounter 5.

5. NAGGARAMAKAM

If the **PCs** have played the adventure *Marauders of Nibenay*, portions of the Naggaramakam's interior appear familiar. However, some of the structure has been refashioned following the Great Earthquake and the events of the *Prism Pentad*. Consequently, while some things may look familiar others are not.

After ascending the near vertical steps of the Naggaramakam, you enter a dark corridor with a sense of foreboding not easily dismissed. Low-burning lights of a magical nature are the only means of illumination as you traverse several gloomy corridors, and you soon lose track of your location in the maze of dim passages. After what seems like a mile of darkness you suddenly come to a great hallway, rectangular in nature, whose floor, walls, and ceiling are carved completely of jade. The chamber is illuminated by some three dozen glowing emerald spheres hanging from the ceiling in chains of bone, showering all in an eerie greenish glow.

Proceeding slowly through the chamber you see three figures standing in wait, one seated on a high throne while the other two stand in the shadows to either side. You are soon standing before the throne upon which only the Shadow King may sit, and your templar guide(s) quickly drop to their knees in reverence to their master.

Though they do not expect it, a show of respect here by the **PCs** goes a long way towards earning the respect of the sorcerer-monarchs. The **DM** should pause briefly in reading text to allow for this possibility, then continue with the following:

With a wave of his hand the Shadow King causes the jade orbs to burn bright, illuminating the chamber to a near-normal level. It is then you recognize the shadowy figures for what they truly are, the sorcerer monarchs Hamanu of Urik and Lalali-Puy of Gulg. The look of surprise on your face is evident, and a soft chuckle can be heard from the direction of the throne. The shadow king then speaks. "Introductions are unnecessary and time moves against us. Not since the time of Rajaat's release at the hands of

the usurper Tithian has Athas faced so great a danger. Dregoth the Undead Dragon-King, the Third Champion of Rajaat, is on his way to becoming the first god of Athas. Unless he is stopped, all divine magic on Athas shall be lost to all who do not pledge allegiance to Dregoth; and in his visions for Athas, there will be no men, elves or dwarves - there will only be his dray. Dregoth must not be allowed to succeed."

"The destruction of Raam was only a single component in the spell our fellow Champion casts to elevate himself to godhood, one he doubtlessly fabricated with knowledge gleamed from his travels to the Outer Planes. You might have felt the loss of divine magic from the Elemental Planes already. It is only the beginning. Soon all elemental magic procured from the Inner Planes will be lost!"

The Shadow King then suddenly sits back in his throne, for a blink of an eye his face is altered, revealing a dark alien appearance, but his illusions of a human face return instantly. The Shadow King's face has a drained look upon it. The Lion of Urik steps forward, his bold strides carrying him with an air of authority that is difficult to disregard. "You must excuse our host," Hamanu states, "for the power it takes to maintain the magical boundary surrounding the city can be taxing. Perhaps you've asked yourselves why you are here? It is quite simple really. We are in need of your help. The three of us cannot openly act against Dregoth without him knowing and allowing him to retaliate. In many ways Dregoth has already become even more powerful than the Dragon of Tyr ever was. The fate of Raam would befall all cities large and small should we directly interfere, and I would guess that all would be killed instead of just enough to power his sinister spell. Hence, we need powerful agents armed with the knowledge needed to defeat him, and with the continual loss of divine magic our templars would prove ineffective for this task."

"Do you even realize what is happening here, mortals?" rudely interjects the Oba of Gulg after viewing your trepidation, "Do you have any idea how magic travels from the Elemental Planes to Athas? Our former master explained it to us once, having studied all forms of magic for over 2,000 years. Elemental magic travels from the

Inner Planes to Athas along conduits. On other worlds beyond this one exist god-like beings that gather energy from their worshipers along somewhat similar conduits, but these conduits do not exist on Athas. Dregoth plans to move the conduits from the Inner Plane to the Outer Plane, believing this will make him a god like those on other worlds, further increasing his power to unknown proportions. If he succeeds, only his worshippers shall receive divine magic and all that oppose him will be annihilated. Do you understand the peril now?"

"Though ill-mannered," replies the Shadow King with an apparent second wind, "my dear Lalali-Puy is correct. Unless Dregoth is stopped, all divine magic as we know it shall no longer exist, and the Ravager of Giants will reign supreme. After viewing your efforts in Raam, you are our first choice to oppose Dregoth's plans. Defeating the undead dragon will be no easy matter, and you'll be in need of powerful magic if you are to succeed, magic we're prepared to give you. The reward for this task would be great, as you would have the gratitude of three sorcerer-monarchs to fuel your greed. There is no deception here, our words and compensation are authentic. We must know your answer forthwith, as every moment brings Dregoth closer to his goal."

The sorcerer-monarchs are true in their dealings with the PCs, though the information they present is only what the party needs to know to get them interested. Once they agree, more information is provided. Should the PCs still be hesitant, the sorcerer-monarchs urge them to look at the presented facts. Under no circumstance do the sorcerer-monarchs submit to spells or psionic probes by the PCs.

If the PCs decline the task presented to them by the sorcerer-monarchs, the Shadow-King makes it perfectly clear that others of less skill can be chosen, though they may not survive the task. If the PCs refuse, the adventure is over unless they decide to take on Dregoth without the aid of the three artifacts the sorcerer-monarchs would give them information about. In this case the DM should insure that their foolishness costs them their lives.

Once the PCs accept the task presented to them by the sorcerer-monarchs, they are told about the items needed to help defeat Dregoth.

"The key to defeating Dregoth," begins the Shadow King, "is preventing his power from affecting you while at the same time being able to injure him. Few weapons on Athas can truly harm a Champion of Rajaat, and fewer still can counter their power. One such item was the Scourge of Rkard used to slay the Dragon, though now it rests broken in the magma of the Ring of Fire guarded by Sadira's wards. But the Scourge is not the only artifact of Athas' past, and not the only one created by Rajaat the War-Bringer and others since and before him. Dregoth had been slain before and it can be done again. When he was first slain two millennia ago several such items were carried by his killers to counter his power, and it is these items you shall seek."

"Unfortunately," the Shadow King adds, "two of the three artifacts were held by Abalach-Re and Andropinis, the former slain and the latter imprisoned in the Black, though some of their templars may know of their current locations. The third artifact was lost following Dregoth's first 'death,' though rumors persist regarding its return." The Shadow King once again sits back in his throne, and the sorcerer-queen of Gulg steps forward.

"The first item you shall need was once owned by the late Abalach-Re," coldly states the Oba, "a large sapphire known as the Star of Badna. This perfect gem was unearthed from the mines of Raam shortly after the defeat of Rajaat, and was enchanted by the queen to act as a protection against arcane magic cast by defilers. This artifact has disappeared since her death, though my sources report that a former templar named Grogh-En may know the location of the sapphire. Be warned mortals, as rumors persist of a terrible curse that accompanies the Star of Badna. It is unknown whether this is hearsay fabricated by Abalach-Re or truth. You must return to Raam and discover the Star of Badna's whereabouts."

"The second item is another weapon created by Rajaat," begins the ruler of Urik, "a sword

known as the Scorcher. It was with this weapon that I dealt Dregoth his death blow with frightening ease, so much so that I threw the weapon into the center of the Silt Sea to prevent its use against us in the future. I had thought the Scorcher lost forever until news of a sword matching its description appeared in the village of Cromlin 100 years ago, though it soon again disappeared in the hands of an ex-gadiator called Vorr. You should begin your search for this weapon in Cromlin."

"The last artifact was discovered by Rajaat when he took control of the Pristine Tower," says the Shadow King in a low, drained voice. "This halfling artifact is known as the Pearl of the Sunrise Sea, and was given to Albeorn – the true name of Andropinis – by the First Sorcerer to aid him in his quest to rid Athas of elves. The Pearl protects its owner from psionic powers like no other item on Athas, but also prevents its owner from manifesting any form of psionic power. This is likely due to the fact that the Pearl was created during a time before psionics. Regardless, to a sorcerer-monarch, the pearl is a double-edged sword, and the item was not with Andropinis when he was imprisoned in the Black by Rajaat two years ago. It may still be hidden somewhere in Balic. It is said that the hidden templars of Andropinis have a way to contact their former master. You should seek them, for only Andropinis would know the location of the relic for certain.

"With these three artifacts," concludes Nibenay, "you stand the best chance of preventing Dregoth from completing his spell. Our divination of what the Dread Lord is doing indicates that his spell will not be complete for some time, at least two weeks. However, the more stages of his spells that are completed, the more divine magic shall disappear. You must find the three relics and confront Dregoth before the spell is completed, else we three must take action. Be warned! If we are forced to confront him the devastation to the land is likely to be vast, perhaps laying waste to the entire Ivory Triangle. This is another reason why you must undertake the mission in our place. Despite what you think of us, we do not wish to see our cities in ruin and Athas destroyed further.

After you have located the three artifacts, Dregoth is likely to be found in the subterranean city of New Giustenal. Well," pauses the Shadow King, "are you up to the task?"

If the PCs have further questions the DM should use information provided throughout *Dregoth Ascending* to answer them, being careful not to divulge any facts the sorcerer-monarchs would not know regarding Dregoth's plans. One thing the sorcerer-monarchs are not telling the PCs is that the artifacts would work equally well against them as they do against Dregoth. For this reason they'll be on their guard should the PCs succeed in their task and come after them at the end of the adventure.

Rewards: If the PCs lawfully live up to their end of the bargain, the sorcerer-monarchs shall live up to theirs and reward the PCs handsomely. The following are some of the things that can be promised should the PCs succeed in thwarting Dregoth's plans:

Freedom: For those concerned with slavery, each of the sorcerer-monarchs agrees to release 500 slaves from bondage should the PCs defeat Dregoth. These slaves must leave their cities, never to return. Since the Dragon is no longer around to demand a levy, this is an easy request by the sorcerer-monarchs. The tyrants care not where the slaves go.

Wealth: Each PC is offered 5,000 gold pieces for defeating Dregoth, which is a king's ransom by Athas's standards. No PC can collect more than 5,000 gold if other members of the group do not return.

Property: The sorcerer-monarchs offer each PC the equivalent of a noble's estate in one of their cities or the city-state of Tyr, where Hamanu secretly owns several holdings (this is not revealed to the party just yet though). Each estate has an annual net income of 1,000 ceramic pieces.

Magic: The treasure holds of the sorcerer-monarchs are vast, and rare magical items and forgotten spells can be found only there. Another deal may also involve the PCs

being able to keep one (and only one) of the three retrieved artifacts. The others are to be handed over to the sorcerer-monarchs following Dregoth's defeat.

Once the PCs have no further questions, the Shadow King has a few parting words for them before they begin their search for the three relics:

"It is very unlikely you'll be able to kill Dregoth," says the Shadow King, "but in truth you do not have to. Remember that all you have to do is prevent him from successfully completing his spell. In theory this would restore the elemental conduits to normal and return the lost divine magic to Athas. Once the spell has been disrupted a hasty retreat would be in order, as I'm sure Dregoth is going to be extremely unhappy with your interference. Remember as well that the Dread King probably has agents in every city, dray of extreme cunning and skill, to hinder your quest. At the very least they may alert their master as to your deeds, and should Dregoth confront you before you have all three artifacts you're as good as dead. For this reason you should attract as little attention to yourselves as possible before you're ready to confront the undead king."

"If you have no further questions," Nibenay concludes, "my high templars will show you out and make sure you are provided with what you need for your journey. Speed is of the essence, as your time is finite. If you fail, all of Athas may be doomed. Go now."

Once the PCs have been escorted from the Naggaramakam, the high templars have been instructed to supply the PCs with any mundane items (and a few magical items) they require for their mission. This includes alchemical items, spell components, masterwork or psionic/magical weapons of up to a +1 enchantment (20% chance of being metal), metal weapons, and any type of mundane non-metal armor. The templars also have a limited number of magical fruits to give the PCs: 4 *potionfruits of cure moderate wounds*, 2 *potionfruits of cure serious wounds*, a *potionfruit of fly*, a *potionfruit of bull's strength*, and a *potionfruit of bear's endurance*.

If the **PCs** do not possess mounts of their own, the templars provide either kanks or crodlus for the journey (and inix for half-giants). If the **PCs** are somehow destitute, they are each given 400 ceramic pieces for the journey. Lastly, should any of the **PCs** still suffer from wounds or other ill effects obtained in the defense of Raam, the high templars see to their curing before they leave Nibenay. This includes nearly all forms of divine healing from *cure light wounds* to *heal*; because of the *godhood* spell this does not include 9th level spells.

Because of the loss of divine spells as more stages of the *godhood* spell are completed, the sorcerer-monarchs do not offer to resurrect any deceased **PCs**. They could, however, send replacements (either as **NPCs** to replace dead **PCs**, or they can be run by player owners of dead **PCs**).

Notes to the DM

The **PCs'** quest for the three ancient artifacts is structured as three separate short adventures, the *Star of Badna*, the *Pearl of the Sunrise Sea*, and the *Scorcher*. Details on these artifacts are found in **Appendix II: Artifacts**. The **PCs** can search for any of the three relics first, though it makes sense to find the *Scorcher* last since it is then a short journey to New Giustenal following the collection of all three items.

Time is also an issue in this chapter. The **PCs** have 20 days to gather all three artifacts and reach New Giustenal. For every five days that pass from the **PCs** meet Arru, Dregoth completes another stage of his *godhood* spell (3rd stage on day 5, 4th stage on day 10, 5th stage on day 15 and 6th stage on day 20). After Dregoth has completed the 6th stage, he relocates to the Pristine Tower where he will complete the *godhood* spell. If it becomes apparent that the **PCs** are not going to retrieve all three artifacts within this timeframe, they may have to confront

Dregoth at the Pristine Tower with only one or two of the relics. If the **PCs** haven't gathered the three artifacts and aren't nearing New Giustenal by the 20th day, they will be contacted psionically by the Shadow King and told to go immediately to the Pristine Tower before Dregoth is able to complete the *godhood* spell. Note that the journey to New Giustenal and the Pristine Tower are detailed in Part III of *Dregoth Ascending*.

The Star of Badna

Following the imprisonment of Rajaat, Uyness of Waverly could not return to the city of her birth as it had been consumed by the encroaching Silt Sea. Through intrigue and deception Uyness laid claim to Raam, one of the largest and richest city-states in the Tablelands. Once she asserted herself as queen of the city, the former Champion changed her name to Abalach-Re and proclaimed herself as a servant of a greater power, a supreme entity named Badna from which she and her templars drew their power. This was of course a fraud, as the being known as Badna has never existed.

One of the benefits in ruling Raam was its plentiful mines, which for centuries produced alabaster, sapphires, and emeralds by the thousands before being mined out several King's Ages ago. The largest gem to be taken from these mines, a sapphire of over 200 carats, was accredited to be a gift to Raam from Badna by the sorcerer-queen, and was named the *Star of Badna*. This gem was often displayed to the general populace as a way to dupe Raamites into believing their destiny was controlled by a great celestial entity, making them more content with their lives.

Nearly 100 years after taking control of Raam, Abalach-Re discovered the intentions of her neighbor Dregoth to complete his dragon metamorphosis. With Borys of Ebe still rampaging across the Tablelands, none

of the other sorcerer-monarchs wanted the Ravager of Giants to attain such power. Hence, Abalach-Re planned to lead the other former Champions to Giustenal to kill Dregoth, but being one of the weakest of the remaining Champions she needed a powerful weapon to give her the edge against the Dread Lord. Following several weeks of seclusion, she empowered the near-perfect *Star of Badna* with powerful wards that not only protected the bearer from defiler-based spells, but granted other protections and abilities as well. With the aid of the *Star of Badna*, Abalach-Re and the other sorcerer-monarchs slew Dregoth with ease.

Following Dregoth's death and the destruction of Giustenal, Abalach-Re discovered that the power imbued in the *Star of Badna* came with a horrible curse should the possessor hold on to the item for an extended period of time, a price the sorcerer-queen was not willing to pay. Unwilling to give up an artifact of such power should she ever need it again, Abalach-Re bequeathed the *Star of Badna* to several senior and high templars over the next 2,000 years (usually ones she did not like). Over a period of time, which was different for each templar, the bearer of the *Star* would fall victim to its curse, and another caretaker would have to be found. This cycle continued until Abalach-Re's death at the hands of Sadira of Tyr in Free Year 10, after which the *Star of Badna* disappeared.

The last known caretaker of the *Star of Badna* was a human named Grogh-En, a senior templar sympathetic to the Veiled Alliance and the plight of Nanda Shatri. The sorcerer-queen discovered the templar's association with her daughter, and turned control of the *Star of Badna* over to Grogh-En knowing its curse would ultimately kill him. In the chaos that followed Abalach-Re's death other high-level templars, now without their spells, searched for the *Star of Badna* hoping it would grant them power. However, both Grogh-En and the sapphire

disappeared somewhere in the city and have not been seen or heard from in two years.

The coming of Dregoth to Raam stirred Grogh-En from his place of hiding for a short time. This was due to the Dread Lord's close proximity to one of the items that had ended his first life. The monster that Grogh-En had become due to the *Star of Badna*'s curse wandered the ruins of the Palace District before returning to his hiding place in the Consecrated Sepulcher of Badna.

During his emergence Grogh-En was spotted by a former low-level templar of Abalach-Re named Xion, who has been living in the ruined Palace District for the past two years, one of only a handful of people that still live there, and recognized the *Star of Badna* in his hands. After the invasion ended Xion attempted to sell the information to another former templar named Roal, one of the more powerful templars now aligned with the Merchant's Circle. Xion related his encounter with Grogh-En, though recognizing the name of Grogh-En, a former enemy of Roal's, the senior templar killed Xion before he could mention the *Star of Badna*.

To find the *Star of Badna* the PCs must use their contacts in the three factions of Raam to learn of Roal and the information he possesses regarding Xion. Clues lead the PCs to believe that a man named Xion may know of Grogh-En's location, but now only Roal knows where. The PCs must learn what Xion told Roal before he died to narrow their search. Otherwise, they're left searching the ruins of the entire Palace District.



Return to Raam

In their search for the *Star of Badna*, the **PCs** must return to Raam. How this is accomplished is up to the **DM**, but it is most likely they'll be coming either from Nibenay, the Valley of Trevain, or far off Balic. Depending on how the party get to Raam, the **DM** is encouraged to insert random encounters based on the various terrain type the **PCs** transverse.

Following clues presented by the Oba of Gulg, the **PCs** most likely come into Raam looking for a former templar of Abalach-Re named Grogh-En. Using the various contacts they've made to learn more about Grogh-En the **PCs** hear of Xion and are eventually lead to Roal.

Status of Raam

Dregoth's army has left Raam completely and many refugees have returned to the city. Life in Raam is far from normal, as many of the alliances and repairs presented at the end of *Dregoth Ascending Part I* have only just begun to take shape. If at least a week has passed since the **PCs** departed from Nibenay, more predominant sense of order can be seen in the city due to the influence of Leviath the Calm. Additionally, the Merchant Circle is completely formed and barricaded in the Noble District, and the Night Runners have a firm grip on affairs in the Tradesmen District. Note that in the wake of the invasion the price for everything, from food to advice, is extremely inflated, costing two or three times the list price.

6. INFORMATION

When the **PCs** arrive in Raam they will likely begin by looking to allies or contacts in an effort to locate Grogh-En. They may attempt to gather information personally. Results of a **PC Gather Information** check are restricted to the information below; it

does not lead directly to Roal. No information comes up for results below 20.

DC 20: Grogh-En was one of Abalach-Re's senior templars.

DC 25: Grogh-En disappeared shortly after Abalach-Re's death.

DC 30: Grogh-En was rumored to be sympathetic to the Veiled Alliance.

DC 35: Grogh-En was chosen by his queen to become the caretaker of the Star of Badna.

DC 40: Grogh-En was recently spotted near the Palace ruins.

Below is a list of contacts the **PCs** could seek out in this adventure and what information can be garnered from them. If the characters have relationships with other **NPCs** based on a **DM's** individual campaign, either substitute one of the possibilities below or create your own. In any event, no clues gathered by the **PCs** lead them immediately to Roal.

Asaran

Asaran is a seasoned mercenary, but his knowledge is limited when it comes to matters outside his field of work, such as the names of templars and their whereabouts. However, he knows that the Night Runners have a reputation for turning up the strangest of information as long as the price is right.

Hukaa New Moons

The leader of the Night Runners can help the **PCs** if they are on good or neutral terms with the elves. If the **PCs** participated in the elf and dray battle in *Dregoth Ascending* part I, Hukaa will return the favor now and use her network of spies to learn what she can of Grogh-En free of charge. If the **PCs** didn't participate in the elf and dray battle, but are on good terms with Leviath the Calm, she can investigate for the price of 1,500 Cp. If the **PCs** are on neutral terms with both Leviath and the elves, the price is 3,000 Cp.

After one day of investigation the Night Runners discover that a former templar named Xion had been speaking to people in

the Noble and Tradesmen District about Grogh-En soon after the invasion ended. He also inquired about where to find another ex-templar of the newly formed Merchant Circle, though they do not have a name. Xion is not affiliated with any faction, new or old, of Raam, and was said to have lived in the ruins of the Palace District with an unknown young lady.

Keelorr Dark Moon

Keelorr offers the PCs the same services as Hukaa New Moons, assuming the PCs are on good or neutral terms with the Night Runners. It may be easier to contact Keelorr than Hukaa, if the PCs retrieved the stash of magical items for Keelorr and participated in the elf and dray battle in *Dregoth Ascending* part I.

Korno

Korno, if he is still around and on good terms with the PCs, has little information to offer them, but he knows of a street vendor in the Tradesmen District, Yestera-Opik, who knows many rumors about what goes on in the city.

Leviath the Calm

The gentle half-giant that is being praised as the savior of Raam is of little help to the PCs. He has never heard of a templar named Grogh-En, nor has he ever seen the *Star of Badna*, though he has heard of the giant sapphire. Leviath does suggest to the PCs to inquire with the Night Runner elf tribe. He has recently formed a steady alliance with the elves, and their espionage could be extremely useful in discovering hard-to-find information. Regardless of when the PCs come to Raam following the invasion, Leviath and many of his followers can be found repairing the southern gate and walls.

Mohaj

The House M'ke agent in charge of protecting the trade emporium during the dray invasion has been assigned to other duties and is on a caravan bound for Draaj. Were he present, he would not have been able to do much for the PCs either.

Nanda Shatri

Being the daughter of Abalach-Re, Nanda knows about the *Star of Badna* and the templar Grogh-En. If the heroes' plans for the artifact are revealed to the preserver she recalls the following:

"In the year before her death Abalach-Re," relates Nanda, "my mother, gave possession of the Star of Badna to Grogh-En, one of her senior templars. Many thought this to be a great honor, but there are those of us who know otherwise. Though it is an item of great power, a terrible curse befalls the possessor of the Star, the nature of which only my mother knew for certain."

"I came to know Grogh-En through dealings regarding the crematory," she continues, "and somehow, I was never certain how, he learned it was the headquarters of the Veiled Alliance. Perhaps it was because of this knowledge or because of his friendship with me that he was given custody of the Star of Badna three months before my mother's death. As Raam raged in chaos following my mother's death I searched for Grogh-En, but never found him. On the threat of death a lowly templar said he saw Grogh-En amidst the ruins of the palace... but I never found him. Perhaps you can begin your search there, though his trail is over two years old."

"About the Star of Badna," warns Nanda in worried voice, "the item is cursed to be sure. Were I you I would use it then discard it as quickly as possible, lest you all become its latest victims."

Targos M'ke

Targos has heard of the *Star of Badna* and recalls there was a templar named Grogh-En, but he isn't really of immediate help to the PCs. Targos offers to gather information on Grogh-En's location, for a fee. Since Targos turns to the Night Runners for their counterintelligence and espionage, the PCs will be paying not only the Night Runners' fee but also Targos' mark-up, for a total price of 2,000 Cp. If the PCs saved his daughter in *Dregoth Ascending* part I, Targos gathers the information with half the mark-up, for 1,750 Cp. Business is business after all, and good information is hard to find.

After one day of investigation the Night Runners discover that a former templar named Xion had been speaking to people in the Noble and Tradesmen District about Grogh-En soon after the invasion ended. He also inquired about where to find another ex-templar of the newly formed Merchant Circle, though they do not have a name. Xion is not affiliated with any faction, new or old, of Raam, and was said to have lived in the ruins of the Palace District with an unknown young lady.

Yestera-Opik

Yestera-Opik is a human food wholesaler operating in the Tradesmen District who knows many rumors. For 50 ceramics per question, he gladly shares the latest rumors with the PCs.

If asked about Grogh-En, Yestera-Opik knows the templar was spotted in the Palace District recently, but doesn't know where.

If asked about Xion, the wholesaler can reveal Xion is an ex-templar living somewhere in the ruins of the Palace District with a girl named Dara-Sin.

If asked about Roal, Yestera-Opik can tell the PCs that Roal is an ex-templar who leads Raam's former police force, the mansabdars, and that he is a corrupt, immoral and untrustworthy character, even for a templar.

7. THE PALACE DISTRICT

The Palace District was inaccessible during the dray invasion, but the barrier that was triggered by Dregoth's presence vanished when the undead dragon king left with his army.

Locations and encounters:

◆ If the PCs search for the young lady Xion lived with, they can find Dara-Sin in the northern part of the district. See encounter 8. **DARA-SIN**.

◆ **Consecrated Sepulcher of Badna**: This is where Grogh-En can be found along with the *Star of Badna*. See encounters 11. **THE**

CONSECRATED SEPULCHER OF BADNA and 12. GROGH-EN.

◆ **Ivory Palace Ruins**: The ruins of Abalache's palace were looted by the nobles shortly after her death. Since then, rumors of terrible curses and undead beings in the palace have kept others from investigating. Some claim it is Badna's vengeance manifested upon the looters, whereas others disregard the rumors as bard's tales. Fact is, recently, a powerful T'liz has moved into the palace ruins.

◆ **Ruins of the Royal Barracks**: These ruins once accommodated Raam's officers and finest soldiers. It has been emptied of valuables and abandoned by its former residents. Now it is the home of beggars and other squatters who have sought shelter.

8. DARA-SIN

Ex-templars afraid to associate with other Raamites for fear of retaliation for past deeds eke out a living in the ruins of the Palace District. If the PCs inquire about Xion and the woman living with him to people encountered in the Palace District, for a handful of coins they are sent to a general area in the northern section of the district and told to look for a young woman with black hair.

The woman's name is Dara-Sin. She was friends with Xion and knew of his intentions to visit a former high templar named Roal who is now a member of the Merchant Circle. She doesn't know exactly why Xion went to see him, just that it was something about another templar named Grogh-En and getting enough money for his information to leave Raam forever.

All Dara-Sin wants is to have Xion returned to her so they can start their life over again, which is going to be impossible unless the PCs locate and restore Xion to life. In this case, the PCs can possibly obtain Xion's body from Nanda Shatri.

9. ROAL

Once the **PCs** have Roal's name as a starting point for locating Xion, they can find him in the Noble District—however, getting there may not be easy. Tensions are still tight following the invasion, and guards may not allow the **PCs** to visit with Roal. Soldiers in the Noble District might have to be bribed in order to be taken to Roal's location for 10 ceramic pieces or more. Once the party is escorted to Roal, read the following:

The man named Roal is a thin, wiry man of undetermined age dressed in regal attire. Though he has yet to speak, the man's smug appearance and vile sneer gives you a revolting feeling and instant dislike for him. "I am a busy man," snarls Roal, "there is a city to rebuild. What do you want?"

Roal's responses from here on in depend greatly on what either he knows or what the **PCs** tell him. Based on that information, dealings with the ex-templar can either be

difficult or extremely simple. True to his word he is very busy and wants to get rid of the **PCs** as soon as he can, provided he does not think he can profit from the encounter. It is extremely important for the players to watch their words around Roal as he hears *everything* they say, using it to his advantage. The **PCs** may ask *one* question before Roal tries to capitalize on their situation.

If the **PCs ask about Xion (as a first question),** Roal's recent encounter with him, or that they are searching for him, read the following:

"A worthless lad I was forced to tutor in the name of our late queen," spits the man, "one I had hoped to never see again. Three days after the attack he came to see me, babbling something about another worthless templar named Grogh-En and that he had seen him near the Consecrated Sepulcher—demanding money for the information. When I told him I cared not for his ramblings he attacked me, and one of my guards killed him. His body has been sent to the crematorium. One less useless person in the city for me to worry about if you ask me."

If the **PCs ask about Grogh-En (as a first question),** read the following:

Scratching his head Roal sneers and replies, "Oh yes, I remember Grogh-En. It's quite a funny story actually. I discovered that this bumbling dolt was working with the Veiled Alliance. Fearing the wrath of my queen I told her at once ... and I never saw Grogh-En again. I thought him dead until a worthless lad named Xion babbled something about seeing Grogh-En near the ruins of the Consecrated Sepulcher, demanding money for the information. When I told him I cared not for his ramblings he attacked me, and one of my guards killed him. His body has been sent to the crematorium. One less useless person in the city for me to worry about if you ask me."

Either of these replies get the **PCs** the information they need (the mentioning of Grogh-En near the ruins of the Consecrated Sepulcher), and at this point it would be best for the **PCs** to take what information they've



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learned and depart. If even one more question is asked of Roal he becomes curious as to the heroes' motives, the current distraction of work gone from the forefront of his mind. If the **PCs** are not cautious in what they say, it is likely they'll end up paying for it as a result of Roal's greed. Use the following instances as a basis for what Roal does should the heroes' tongues speak too much.

Asking more than one question: Roal instantly becomes curious as to the **PCs'** intentions, and has them followed for the remainder of the **PCs'** stay in Raam – which likely results in an ambush after they've found the *Star of Badna*. In turn, Roal also asks a few questions of his own regarding why the **PCs** want to know about either Grogh-En or Xion. If he is met with resistance or visible lies at this point, Roal uses his psionic powers to attempt to extract the information from the mind of any character that does not appear to be a spellcaster or manifester, warriors being the obvious choice. Further information on Roal's part would additionally cost money (see below).

Blowing the whistle too soon: If the **PCs** blurt out their intentions in a way that leaves Roal with an obvious open door for profit (but not giving away the secret regarding the *Star of Badna*), the party can expect to pay no less than 200 ceramic pieces for the information. If it becomes transparent that the **PCs** have ample coin to spend (in whatever form), the price can go up to as much as 1,000 ceramic pieces in a heartbeat. Should the **PCs** pay more than 100 ceramic for anything he has to say, Roal has them followed to the Palace District and may also try to use psionics on the party to learn more about their motives.

Revealing the Star of Badna: This is by far the worst thing the **PCs** could divulge to a crooked ex-templar. Short of trying to kill the party for their information, Roal tells them what they want to know (the location of the Consecrated Sepulcher of Badna) and prepares a deadly reception for them after they've recovered the *Star of Badna* from

Grogh-En (see Encounter 13. **AMBUSH**). With the resources of the Merchant Circle behind him, such a rendezvous could be fatal.

If the **PCs attack Roal:** Though he may not prove to be too much of a challenge for the **PCs** in combat, remember that Roal does have six guards close by he can call upon if he's attacked (use stats for **Merchant Circle Soldier**). Also, such actions make the **PCs** enemies of the Merchant Circle. As for other possible repercussion regarding foolish actions by the **PCs** in their dealings with Roal, the **DM** is encouraged to be creative and make them "pay through the nose" for their carefree attitude.

10. XION'S BODY

The **PCs** can obtain Xion's body from Nanda Shatri at the crematorium. If the **PCs** have alerted Nanda Shatri about Xion, she discovers his body and notifies the **PCs**. If the **PCs** have the means to cast *speak with dead*, *raise dead* or *resurrection*, they can learn from Xion that he saw Grogh-En walking the streets of the Palace District carrying the *Star of Badna*, and that he came out from amidst ruins that have to be the remains of the Sacred Sepulcher of Badna. Xion went to Roal with the information on Grogh-En, but rather than pay him for his information, Roal murdered him in cold blood. Xion only wants to be reunited with his woman, Dara-Sin, whom he lived with in the Palace District, and to leave Raam with her.

11. THE CONSECRATED SEPULCHER OF BADNA

Once one of the most magnificent structures in Raam, the Consecrated Sepulcher was a huge mausoleum that, among other things, contains the last 30 generations of Abalach-Re's favorite husbands and other devoted followers. During the riots that destroyed most of the Palace District the main support

pillars of the building were damaged, and the weight of the mausoleum brought it crumbling down in a shower of stone and mortar. Afterwards, sections of the Consecrated Sepulcher were still intact, though all entrances into it from the outside were completely blocked. Because of rumors (spread by the sorcerer-queen herself) regarding undead dwelling in the building, looters purposely avoided all attempts at breaching the rubble. Would they have known the *Star of Badna* was inside they may have thought differently.

Grog-En was in possession of the *Star of Badna* for only a few months when Abalach-Re was killed, not enough time for the artifact's curse to take its complete hold on him. As riots stormed through the streets of Raam, Grog-En took shelter in the Consecrated Sepulcher in an effort to protect the *Star of Badna* – and as a result was entombed when the building collapsed. Soon after the *Star of Badna*'s curse took hold

of the ex-templar, and he has remained in the ruined Consecrated Sepulcher ever since. When Dregoth attacked Raam the *Star of Badna*'s influence drew Grog-En from the ruins through a secret exit, but once the Dread Lord disappeared Grog-En returned to his ruined home.

Finding the Consecrated Sepulcher:

If the PCs decide to search the ruins of the Palace District, the chances for the PCs happening upon the hidden location of the Consecrated Sepulcher of Badna amidst the rubble are close to zero. Even if the PCs have been in Raam prior to the death of the sorcerer-queen and seen the Consecrated Sepulcher, the exact location of the Consecrated Sepulcher is difficult to pinpoint among the many crumbling ruins and rubble in the Palace District ([Search check DC 20](#)). The easiest way to find the Consecrated Sepulcher for the PCs is to be guided there by either a member of the Night Runners, a former templar, Xion or

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Dara-Sin. In all cases, the guides look for some type of compensation for their information. The Night Runners and any former templars desire coin, a sum of at least 100 ceramic to venture near a structure rumored to contain undead. If a templar guide hears mentioning of the *Star of Badna*, the guide contacts Roal, who stakes an ambush. In the case of Dara-Sin, she wants the PCs to find Xion and bring him back to life before she shows them the Sepulcher's location. Xion will be grateful if the PCs return him to life, and will not ask for any service in return – he is in the PCs' debt.

Once the PCs discover the Consecrated Sepulcher, read the following:

The Palace District, once one of the most beautiful places on Athas, has been reduced to broken mortar and crumbling buildings with the death of Abalach-Re – most of the damage being caused by rioting Raamites struggling to gain either power or booty. As you move through the district one broken structure looks the same as the next, and were it not for the nearby spires of the Noble District it would be an easy matter to become lost. After some time you manage to locate the ruins of the Consecrated Sepulcher of Badna. The front portion of the structure has completely collapsed, its fallen pillars blocking the building's only apparent entrance.

If the PCs have been guided here by anyone other than Xion and Dara-Sin, the guide asks the party for whatever payment they may owe him or her and departs. If Xion is resurrected, he can show the PCs a secret tunnel to the structure that bypasses the blocked entrance.

Entering the Consecrated Sepulcher:

After they have found the Consecrated Sepulcher, the PCs still need to find a way to get into the ruined structure. The only means of physical entry is through a secret tunnel, which requires a **Search check DC 30** to locate. If the PCs have raised Xion or used means to speak with him beyond the grave, he can reveal the location of the secret tunnel to them, since he saw Grogh-En exit the Consecrated Sepulcher from it. Other

options of gaining entry include the use of magics or psionics (such as *passwall*, *transmute rock to mud*, *move earth* or *ethereal jaunt*). Without the aid of magic the PCs would have to spend time clearing rubble and rocks. The amount of days needed is calculated from dividing 200 by their combined Strength score, e.g. a combined Strength score of 50 means four days of work.

Inside the Consecrated Sepulcher:

The air inside the Consecrated Sepulcher is stale and foul – though not poisonous. There are no light sources (except the *Star of Badna*) anywhere within the ruin, and ceilings are 20 feet high unless stated otherwise.

The DM is advised to use **Map 1: Sepulcher of Badna** found in the appendix.

Chamber #1 – Antechamber Entrance: If the PCs clear the rubble from the front of the Consecrated Sepulcher they end up in this chamber. Thick dust and dirt cover the floor here, and rubble from the collapsed pillars fills one corner. A skeletal hand can be seen coming out from beneath one of the larger boulders, the remains of a low level templar who happened to be in the building when it collapsed. There is nothing else of interest here.

Chamber #2 – Concealed Entrance: Either through extensive search or with the help of Xion, the PCs can use this entrance to enter the Consecrated Sepulcher and avoid the collapsed front. The tunnel itself is rather thin, and a half-giant can barely squeeze through as long as he is carrying a light load. PCs might notice Grogh-En's footprints on the floor covered in thick dust (**Spot check DC 15**). The tunnel enters the Consecrated Sepulcher in Chamber #3 through one of the larger mausoleum vaults.

Chamber #3 – Mausoleum: For the past 30 generations Abalach-Re has entombed her husbands, loyal high-level templars, and past custodians of the *Star of Badna*. The reason for this is unclear, though it was often theorized the queen did it to keep

them from rising as undead – especially former possessors of the *Star of Badna*. This chamber has a 50 foot ceiling, and the two walls here contain 50 tombs each – only half of which are full. Despite the rumors regarding the Consecrated Sepulcher, there are no undead there except Grogh-En, who is in *Chamber #4 - Shrine of Badna*. Of the 50 bodies in this area, nearly half have their head amputated. These corpses were the guardians of the *Star of Badna*, beheaded by Abalach-Re herself which is one of the few ways to permanently slay a possessor of the artifact once he or she has become a badna zombie. This is an excellent clue for the PCs on how to defeat Grogh-En. Should the PCs begin rummaging through the tombs Grogh-En becomes aware that someone is in

the ruins. Other than worthless glass jewelry, there is nothing else of interest in the tombs. Attentive PCs can spot Grogh-En's footprints (*Spot DC 15*) leading into *Chamber #4*.

Chamber #4 – Shrine of Badna: In addition to being a tomb, the Consecrated Sepulcher of Badna was a place for Raamites to come to view the *Star of Badna*. This was Abalach-Re's way of keeping the populace believing in the divine being Badna. When Abalach-Re was killed and rioters destroyed much of the Palace District, Grogh-En was in this chamber – the curse transforming him into a badna zombie. The chamber contains an altar.

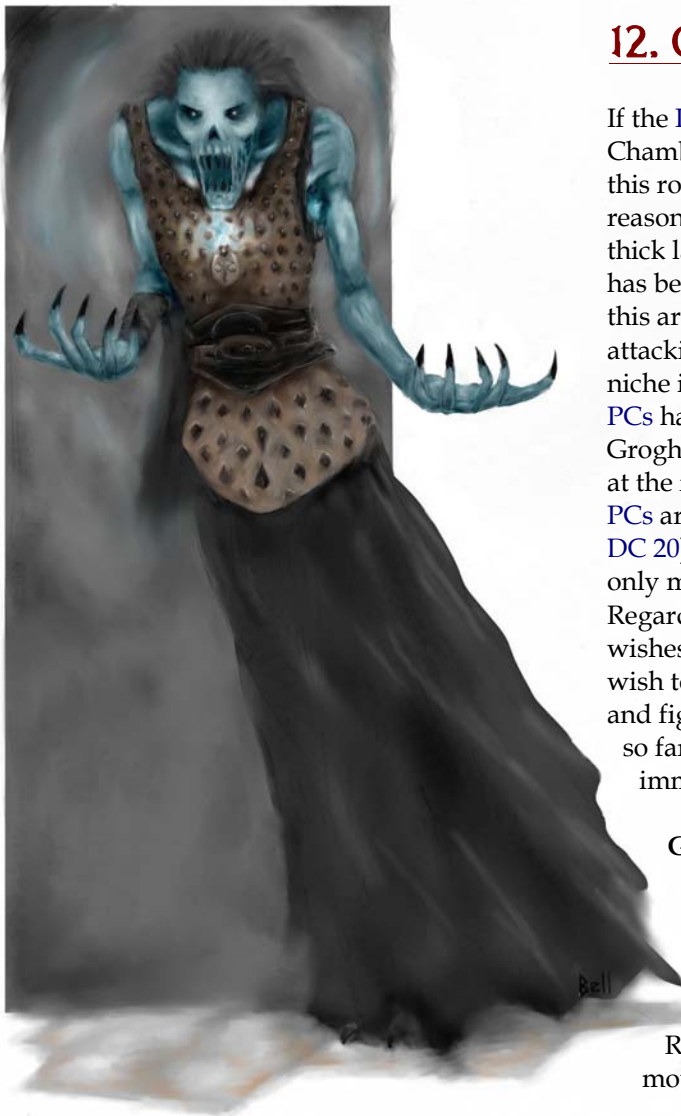
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12. GROGH-EN

If the PCs followed the footprints from *Chamber #3*, they lead to the forefront of this room – then disappear. For some reason, this is the only chamber without a thick layer of dust on the floor. If the party has been excessively loud in approaching this area, Grogh-En is ready for them, attacking suddenly with surprise from a niche in the ceiling above the entrance. If the PCs have been mute in their approach Grogh-En lies prone on an altar-like shrine at the far end of the chamber. Unless the PCs are utterly silent (*Move Silently check DC 20*), Grogh-En becomes aware of them only moments after entering the room. Regardless of any conversation the DM wishes to permit here Grogh-En does not wish to be separated from the *Star of Badna*, and fights until he is destroyed or reduced so far in hit points that he cannot immediately pursue the party.

Grogh-En: hp 65

Remember that if the PCs do not sever Grogh-En's head, he regenerates his damage and pursues the PCs as they leave Raam. Since the zombie has a movement rate of 50ft., he may



eventually catch up to the party and attempt to retrieve the *Star of Badna*. When and where Grogh-En makes his next appearance is left to the DM, but it should be at the most inopportune moment possible.

13. AMBUSH

If the PCs have not been careful in their dealings with Roal, an ambush is awaiting them after they emerge from the Consecrated Sepulcher of Badna with the *Star of Badna*. Alternatively, if the PCs have upset one or more other factions in the city, they can be responsible for the ambush.

Afraid of rumors regarding the Consecrated Sepulcher, the attackers wait for the PCs to emerge before striking. They are lead by a female half-elf defiler named Varanya dressed a black robe, with yellow eyes and curly black hair.

Merchant Circle Muscle (2): hp 74 each
Merchant Circle Archer (4): hp 45 each
Merchant Circle Defiler (1): hp 28

If Roal has specifically discovered the PCs are attempting to locate the lost *Star of Badna*, the number of men in the ambush is increased and Roal leads the attack himself. If he knows the *Star of Badna* is on the line Roal calls in every favor he has in an attempt to capture the artifact.

Merchant Circle Muscle (4): hp 74 each
Merchant Circle Archer (8): hp 45 each
Merchant Circle Defiler (1): hp 28
Roal: hp 60

If half of the attacking force is killed, Roal's forces flee into the surrounding ruins. If the PCs stay in Raam for more than one day, Roal rallies more men for another ambush if he is not killed in the first battle. If another ambush occurs, increase the number of enemies.

Aftermath

From here the PCs can either travel to the village of Cromlin in search of the *Scorcher*, to far-a-way Balic to look for the *Pearl of the Sunrise Sea*, or begin their journey to New Giustenal.

If the PCs are on good terms with Nanda Shatri, she offers to teleport the party to any of the three locations – though she will only bring them within five miles of Giustenal since she has never been to Dregoth's city herself. Nanda could also offer to use her magic in any way she can to help the PCs, including using the spell *identify* to examine unknown magical items. Lastly, Nanda renews her warning regarding the *Star of Badna*, and offers to dispose of the artifact following the conclusion of the adventure.

If the PCs are on good terms with the Night Runners, the elves can supply them with magical items for 1.5 times the listed price. They can also send assassins to deal with Roal, if he still alive and a problem. If the PCs have outstanding favors with the elves, the elves could do this without cost to settle their debt - otherwise the price is 5,000 Cp.

If the PCs are on good terms with Leviath the Calm, he can put them in contact with elemental cleric allies to heal any wounds suffered in battle and provide them with other spellcasting services at the listed price.

If the PCs killed Roal, they will have lost favor with the Merchant Circle. Even if Roal was loathed by many, he was competent and efficient. The PCs will have a difficult time finding goods costing less than twice the listed price in the near future.

The Pearl of the Sunrise Sea

During a time when oceans covered the face of Athas and the Blue Age was ruled by halflings, the nature-masters of the land created many items of great power. Many of these items were life-shaped creations, the art of which has slowly disappeared over the eons. Few of these items survived the coming of the Brown Tide and The Rebirth, and one of these items was the *Pearl of the Sunrise Sea*. Taken from the depths of the ocean now called the Silt Sea, this item was the possession of one of the nature-masters who helped create the Pristine Tower and destroy the encroaching Brown Tide.

Afterwards, the pearl was left in the Pristine Tower by the unknown halfling, and was discovered there six millennia later by Rajaat the First Sorcerer. Over the eons the *Pearl* had developed certain powers due to its proximity to the Pristine Tower, powers the evil pyreen quickly learned and utilized to his benefit. During the height of the Cleansing Wars, Rajaat gave Albeorn, Slayer of Elves, the *Pearl of the Sunrise Sea* to protect him from the substantial psionic powers of the elven kings. Soon after the Champions turned on their master and Albeorn, later known as Andropinis, took control of the city-state of Balic. A century later, with the *Pearl* on his person, Andropinis participated in the assassination of Dregoth along with his fellow sorcerer-monarchs. When Dregoth's superior psionic powers had no effect on him, the Slayer of Elves swore he would study the pearl in greater depth to learn the extent of its capabilities.

In the 2,000 years that followed Andropinis discovered many of the *Pearl's* other powers, and the limitation it imposes for such abilities. In the end he decided that the ancient artifact's limitations outweighed its potent abilities for a being of his power, and he hid the pearl deep within the bowels of his city and telling no one of its location—

even his most trusted templars. During the sorcerer-monarch's confrontation with Rajaat during the Year of Friend's Agitation, the First Sorcerer imprisoned Andropinis in the Black.

For the *PCs* to find the *Pearl of the Sunrise Sea* they must somehow contact Andropinis in his prison within the Black. To do this they'll have to contact the sorcerer-monarch's hidden templars who have discovered a way to speak with their master for a limited amount of time. The *PCs'* have to locate this hidden faction of templars and strike a deal with them to contact Andropinis on their behalf. This is a deal the *PCs* must make, as they'll never find the location of the pearl on their own.

Journey to Balic

Once the *PCs* arrive outside Balic, entering the city is a simple task. Should the party arrive via the Silt Sea, they instantly enter territory controlled by House Wavir. The only other entrance to Balic is the main gate at the eastern end of the city. This gate is considered neutral ground by all three merchant houses, as is the main road that runs from the gate to the western wall of the city. However, once the *PCs* leave the road for the interior of the city they instantly enter one of the three areas managed by the merchant houses.

Status of Balic

Merchant Houses

Balic is far from the city-state it was under the rule of Andropinis, falling under the control of various merchant houses following his disappearance. Like many city-states Balic possessed representatives from several merchant houses, and after some deemed the city too unstable a market for their business only three of them were left—House Wavir, House Tomblador, and House Rees.

House Wavir was the first to make its move following Andropinis' imprisonment, seizing the White Palace, the silt harbor, and all territory in between. Since the seized area was a major portion of the city, Lord Tabaros, leader of House Wavir, declared himself a Trade Lord of Balic. At this point two other houses, House Shom and House Amketch, sold their resources here to the lesser houses of Rees and Tomblador respectively and left the city. These two remaining houses each grabbed what territory was left, dividing Balic into three distinct sections. Of the three House Wavir is the most civil, while both Rees and Tomblador are militant in nature. Other than a triune council that comes together to discuss mutual defense of the city, the three houses have few courtly relations between them.

On the surface Balic does not appear to be a city divided. No walls separate one House's region from another, and no guards patrol the borders collecting tolls from travelers. However, anyone living in the city for even a short while know of the divisions between the trade lord's domains. House Wavir's district is the most clean and free of coercion, House Tomblador is dark and oppressive under Lord Kaladon's rule, and House Rees is a tyrannical work camp where everyone from patricians (nobles) to ex-slaves toil day and night for the profit of Master Trader Lady Essen.

Within each merchant house can be found deceptions and dilemmas—especially in House Rees and House Tomblador which constantly become battlegrounds for power. In House Wavir the Trade Lord Tabaros is more than 100 years old, and has recently taken ill. His granddaughter, Tarinne, is the next in line for leadership of the house, but has yet to measure up to her grandfather's expectations. Meanwhile, beneath the other two Trade Lords lurk subordinates with notions of assassination and foul play that would allow them to take control of the respective houses.

Templars of Andropinis

Since abandoning the White Palace, the templars of Andropinis went in several different directions. A surprisingly large number of them left Balic for good, fearful of retribution from the populace now that their divine spells were gone. A handful of the bureaucratic templars tried to find employment with the merchant houses. Some were successful, filling new positions created with the houses' expansion through Balic – with the exception of House Tomblador, where they were simply killed. The remaining group of templars, the smallest group of the three, went into hiding following the seizure of the city by House Wavir.

This faction, lead by First Templar Asthira, took to an underground network created by the templars hundreds of years ago. When Asthira discovered Andropinis had been imprisoned in the Black and was not dead, she began to research how to contact her master. Through the aid of a shadow wizard, Asthira has become a shadow templar of impressive power – allowing her to communicate with Andropinis.

The First Templar and a handful of other loyal subjects have devoted their lives to finding a way to free their master from the Black – no matter what the cost. One advantage the templars have in their favor is the treasure of the White Palace, which they emptied before going into hiding two years ago. This cache of gold, silver, precious jewels and powerful magical items has allowed the templars to build a small empire beneath the surface of Balic.

14. INFORMATION

When the PCs arrive in Balic they will likely begin to look for the templars, possibly by looking to allies or contacts. They may attempt to gather information personally. Results of a [PC Gather Information](#) check

are restricted to the information below; it does not lead directly to the templars.

DC 10: The three merchant houses, Wavir, Tomblador and Rees, know much about what goes on in the city.

DC 15: Many templars vanished shortly after Andropinis' disappearance. Some left the city, others have been employed by the merchant houses, and a number are unaccounted for.

DC 20: First Templar Asthira is rumored to be alive and seen in Balic a couple of weeks ago.

DC 25: Asthira was seen at the Lazy Mekillot, which is run by the half-giant Mox, a dull-witted brute.

DC 30: Mox is occasionally hired by Asthira for menial tasks requiring great strength.

If the **PCs** follow the lead to the Lazy Mekillot, proceed with encounter **19. THE LAZY MEKILLOT**. If the **PCs** are unable to come up with leads on their own, then they must find another source for information, their best bet being the three merchant houses, Wavir, Rees and Tomblador. The outcome of such action depends on which House they come into contact with first.

Contact with the Merchant Houses

Each merchant house has agents combing the streets of their district 24 hours a day. Should the **PCs** become disruptive or ask too many questions they are likely to attract attention to themselves from such patrols. Such attention, depending on the district, results in anything from a meeting with a Trade Lord to a combative free-for-all. Though difficult, it's not impossible to find the location of the hidden templars without the aid of one of the merchant houses.

The following is a list of factions, locations, and other ways for the **PCs** to begin their search for the *Pearl of the Sunrise Sea* along with a short description of each. It's the job of the **DM** to link these clues together as the **PCs** follow the leads or dead ends presented below, or present their own logical trail of clues to lead the **PCs** to the hidden templars. This list can be altered to work with any

contacts the **PCs** may already have at the discretion of the **DM**, but should not lead the party directly to the hidden templars without some sort of challenge – be it role-playing or combat.

House Wavir: With the disappearance of Andropinis two years ago, House Wavir undertook its most bold action to date and seized a major portion of Balic before more corrupt factions of the city could do the same. Shortly afterwards the self-proclaimed Trade Lord Tabaros pulled all of House Wavir's resources from Draj, Gulg, and Urik, bringing them to Balic to solidify his authority. This was also done because of open warfare that had broken out between House Wavir and the templars of Gulg and Urik, and old rivalries with House Tsalaxa of Draj. This consolidation of forces brought the number of House Wavir employees in Balic to over 2,000, more than that of House Rees and Tomblador combined. Of the three House Wavir is the most pleasant to deal with in Balic.

There are several ways to procure the help of this powerful house. One is to inquire about information at the White Palace, the Silt Harbor, or anywhere else in the Wavir District. Should the **PCs** begin to ask too many questions, or if they're detained by Wavir guards, they're presented to the leader of House Wavir's security, Falmon Durow. If an encounter with Falmon is agreeable, he allows them an audience with Lord Tabaros. If not, they are escorted to another district. Should the **PCs** already have contacts in House Wavir, it's a simple matter for them to get an audience with the aged Lord Tabaros without going through Falmon. See encounter **15. HOUSE WAVIR**.

House Tomblador: Once a lesser house living off a steady supply of silver from a small mine, House Tomblador used every resource it had to purchase the buildings, inventory, and contracts of House Amketch when Wavir took control of the city. Though not the caliber of House Wavir, Tomblador rose quickly in power following the demise of Andropinis. Still engrossed in their new

acquisitions House Tomblador was only able to obtain a small portion of the city in a similar manner before House Rees did the same.

The leader of House Tomblador is Lord Kaladon, a ruthless merchant who wants nothing more than to become dictator of Balic much in the same way Tithian ruled Tyr. Kaladon despises House Wavir for their actions, and House Rees for refusing his offer of alliance to join forces against Tabaros. Only at the insistence of his councilors did he agree to the triune council that oversees the defense of the city, but seldom does Kaladon agree with Lord Tabaros and Lady Essen. Overall, Kaladon is an extremely dangerous man, one the PCs should be wary of dealing with. Getting an audience with him is fairly easy. See encounter 16. **HOUSE TOMBLADOR.**

House Rees: Another minor merchant house that was elevated by the disappearance of the sorcerer-monarch, House Rees struck a deal with the Balic branch of House Shom similar to the one between House Tomblador and House Amketch. House Rees is extremely pleased with the events that have transpired over the past two years, as they're making more money now than ever before; but like most traders is not content with even profitable mediocrity. Knowing they could never win a war with House Wavir, Rees has decided to concentrate their efforts on gaining power through alliances. Such alliances include possible dealings with a tribe of giants off the shores of Balic, and another with the remainder of the Balic army lead by General Zanthiros that currently acts as a raiding tribe along the peninsula.

House Rees is controlled by Lady Essen Rees, an unyielding, charismatic businesswoman who wants to turn Balic into the largest merchant village on all of Athas—to the benefit of House Rees of course. Though relatively fair in her dealings, no one ever gets “something for nothing” when dealing with Lady Essen. If it's apparent someone is desperate for

something, Essen insures they pay top price for the goods. If someone thinks they received a “deal” from the female trader, they had best examine their money pouch for holes.

Gaining an audience with Lady Essen for information is not a difficult task, as her subordinates are rewarded for bringing the inquisitive to her for all dealings with House Rees.

15. HOUSE WAVIR

If the PCs Falmon provides the PCs with no information on his own without consulting his lord or his lord's granddaughter first.

At any meeting with the Trade Lord, the PCs are introduced to his granddaughter Tarinne, a comely female who will someday inherit the business. Falmon Durow is also present, as is Tabaros' personal bodyguard—a **thri-kreen fighter** named Nnn'tkk.

If the PCs ask Tabaros about the Pearl.

Tabaros knows nothing about the *Pearl of the Sunrise Sea*, but it is safe to tell him about it.

If the PCs ask Tabaros about the templars.

Read or paraphrase the following of what Tabaros has to say regarding the templars of Andropinis:

Pulling a woven shawl tightly around him to ward off a draft you do not feel, Lord Tabaros says, “With their master gone, the templars of Andropinis are nothing more than bureaucrats with more ambition than sense. Any templars known to be excessively cruel were either killed by ex-slaves or banished to the wastes two years ago. Those with some measure of administrative skill were retained by myself and my rivals in Balic, but that's all. No one fully trusts the templars, and any move they would make to gain power in the city would be put down by one of the three houses – this much we've agreed upon.”

Coughing to clear his throat, the aged trader continues, "There are some rumors of a hidden sect of those treacherous sons-of-kanks in my city. They say this former high templar – what's her name ... Asthira – leads them. My best spies have found little evidence of such a cult, and even if they did what of it. They're nothing without their master, and Sadira of Tyr herself has told me Dictator Andropinis is imprisoned in something called the Black for eternity. A long time for someone like me to worry about it."

If the PCs have been extremely respectful of Lord Tabaros he offers them the hospitality of House Wavir for the evening. Any basic supplies they may have are replenished, and servants make sure they don't leave the next morning without a full belly and having slept in a real bed. Should they have any

mounts, Tabaros sees to their care as well. No matter what the outcome of the meeting with the Trade Lord, the PCs are confronted by Falmon Durow and Lady Tarinne sometime following the meeting.

Falmon Durow and Tarinne Wavir approach you. "May we have a word?" Tarinne asks. "No disrespect intended towards my grandfather," says the young trader, looking over her shoulder, "but we have kept information regarding the templars from him. His age sometimes hampers his decisions, and he has always hated dealing with anything having to do with Andropinis. Falmon and I know how to contact the First Templar Asthira, but before we give such treasured information we need to know why you wish to contact them. Though our information does not come without a price."



The best thing here is for the PCs to tell the truth. Falmon is prepared for whatever answer the PCs give, having both the inquisitor feat and the psionic power *read thoughts* ready to tell if they're lying or not. If the PCs lie to Tarinne outright, Falmon sends her a quick psionic message with *missive* to let her know – after which she confronts them with it. Tarinne is forgiving in this instance, but only once. If the PCs still refuse to tell Tarinne the truth, Falmon summons a group of half-giant guards to escort them from House Wavir territory – regardless of any invitation by Lord Tabaros. If the PCs tell Tarinne the truth of the matter, she doesn't believe them until Falmon acknowledges their statement – then replies:

"Indeed!" responses the young trader, "I would not have believed it if Falmon had not confirmed you've spoken the truth. You see, I've been dealing with Asthira since shortly after my grandfather took over the majority of Balic. The

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ex-templar knows many secrets about the city, and with her connections we've been able to gain knowledge of House Rees and Tomblador – whom she doesn't trust – that would otherwise be difficult at best to obtain.

"Do not misunderstand my loyalties in this matter," Tarinne insists, "I don't trust Asthira any farther than I could toss a crodlu. Our dealings with her have been strictly business, and our meetings are never face-to-face. I know that Asthira is the leader of a group of ex-templars and where she can be found. For the price of a favor to House Wavir I'll supply you with the name of our contact with Asthira – then you're on your own."

The favor referred to by Tarinne need not occur during this adventure, but may make an interesting adventure for the PCs should they survive their encounter with Dregoth. The contact of Tarinne's is a half-giant named Mox, who can be found at a tavern called the Lazy Mekillot. The PCs are told to present Mox with a pound of salt and 10 silver pieces, and he may or may not take them to Asthira. Normally he only acts as a courier, and to take the PCs to Asthira may require permission from the ex-templar. If their dealings with Tarinne and Falmon have been sincere, they PCs have successfully become an ally of one of the most powerful trading houses in the Tablelands. With the health of Lord Tabaros failing (he'll survive another 2d6 months for campaign purposes), Tarinne is an excellent contact for the PCs to have.

16. HOUSE TOMBLADOR

Kaladon receives the PCs in the company of bodyguards. Lord Kaladon is a dangerous man, which the PCs will come to experience.

If the PCs ask Kaladon about the templars:

Kaladon currently employs no ex-templars of any kind, nor does he know any rumors concerning templars in the city. He recognizes the name Asthira, but only as a

high templar from before Andropinis' disappearance.

If the PCs ask Kaladon about the Pearl:

Read or paraphrase the following:

Lord Kaladon buries his eyes deep in you. His lips open slightly, but he does not speak for another two seconds. "I have a contact that might be able to help you" states the trade lord slowly with a stern voice. "However, be warned", Kaladon points a finger at you, "this is a very dangerous individual, and getting you an audience will require significant compensation." Kaladon folds his hands together, awaiting your response.

Kaladon has no knowledge about the *Pearl of the Sunrise Sea*, nor does he believe any story the PCs can relate of Dregoth's sinister plans – but he does not reveal this to the PCs. Instead he tells the PCs he can put them in contact with someone who does know about the *pearl* – for a price of 400 silver pieces. The DM should roll secret **Sense Motive checks** for the PCs against Kaladon's **Bluff check** (1d20 + 25) to let them catch on to his deceit.

If the PCs agree Kaladon sends them straight into an ambush where he plans to do away with them and take their possessions. See encounter **13. AMBUSH**.

Should the PCs come away unscathed from the ambush and seek out Kaladon, he tells them he knows nothing of the ambush and the party likely scared away the contact with their clumsiness. He offers no other recourse for them, and does not return their money. The mercenaries hired for the attack do not know who hired them.

17. HOUSE REES

If the PCs visit House Rees, they will have to bribe or otherwise manipulate the guards into letting them see the House Matriarch, Lady Essen.

No matter what story the **PCs** spin regarding their reason for being in Balic, Lady Essen becomes extremely interested in their plight. She asks many questions to learn anything that can be of value to her and House Rees.

If the **PCs ask Essen about the templars:**
Read or paraphrase the following:

Lady Essen raises her eyebrows and touches her cheek with two fingers. "I have heard of a group of hidden templars," she says, "but I personally don't know how to contact them." Essen pauses, moving her gaze across each of your faces, before she continues. "However, I have an offer for you. There is an ex-templar in my household I have begun to suspect might somehow be involved with this underground group. His name is Toraus." Essen moistens her lips. "If I ask, he will most likely deny any connection with his former peers, and my trusted telepath is out of town. I will let you question Toraus, on the condition that you tell me everything he tells you, and any expenses are on your part. I don't care what methods you use, as long as he is physically unharmed."

If the **PCs** ask Lady Essen if she knows how to contact the hidden templars she says no. However, she does suspect that an ex-templar in her employment named Toraus knows how. Her suspicions are recent, and she has yet to act on them. Essen wants to make an alliance with Asthira, but has yet to locate her. If the **PCs** agree to get the information out of Toraus and pass it to her, she'll lead them to his office on her estate. For those who know her, this is a most generous offer by Lady Essen.

If the **PCs agree to get the information out of Toraus:** Should the **PCs** agree to Lady Essen's arrangement, they're allowed to speak with Toraus in a secured portion of her estate. When speaking with Toraus, the ex-templar does not "spill his guts" easily to the **PCs**. Aside from the fact he does not know the **PCs**, retribution from Asthira would be horrendous if the party wanted nothing more than to kill her and the rest of the hidden templars. Toraus also suspects

that Lady Essen has put the **PCs** up to the task, and he has no wish to be duped into giving up this secret by his employer.

Toraus scoffs. "Who are you? I don't know who or what you're talking about, and even if I did, why should I even consider telling you anything?"

In spite of Toraus' attitude, there are a few ways of getting information out of the ex-templar. He cares nothing for any complicated story the **PCs** present for why they're here, in the end they're going to need to speak with Asthira. When dealing with the sly ex-templar the **DM** should make sure the **PCs** follow their alignments.

Threats and intimidation do not work against Toraus. He has been prepared to die since many of his brethren were killed two years ago, and there is little the **PCs** can do to make his life worse (life in the service of House Rees is, apparently, no picnic in itself).

"There is nothing you can do to me that others won't do worse. Save your breath and quit wasting both yours and my time."

Like most templars, Toraus is not above simple bribery. His position with House Rees was taken out of fear of being murdered, as many were after Andropinis disappeared. For a price of 200 silver pieces and a promise from Lady Essen to be able to leave her service, Toraus tells the **PCs** about Asthira's helper, Mox the half-giant, who can be found at the Lazy Mekillot inn. Toraus needs the silver to get out of the city and relocate somewhere else in the Tablelands where no one knows him. His price is non-negotiable.

Toraus studies you briefly. "I might know a thing or two, you know. It might upset a few characters if I tell you, though, so much I would need to leave Balic and never come back. I have two conditions, neither of which is negotiable. Before I tell you anything, I need written permission by Lady Essen that I am free to leave her service whenever I wish; and I need 200

silver in coin to start a new life someplace else. Get me Essen's signature and the coin up front, and I'll tell you how to find those you seek. Do we have a deal?

Where the **PCs** may feel they've come away with an excellent deal with Lady Essen, Toraus more than makes up for this with outrageous demands. If the **PCs** have an excess of currency they've been tossing around for much of the adventure, the above price of 200 silver could double or even triple should the **PCs** hassle Toraus during the encounter. If they agree to Toraus' demands, he reveals the following after having received his end of the bargain.

"A pleasure doing business with you. Now, to what I know and who I know. You want to know about templars. Listen up and I'll tell you. When Andropinis became trapped in the Black, the templars lost their magical power. Many fled or were murdered, others sought safety with the Merchant Houses. There's a group that went into hiding though, that is growing in power. Lead by First Templar Asthira, these templars control an underground network of considerable power. My meetings with Asthira have been through the half-giant Mox, the bouncer at the Lazy Mekillot. It is an inn in the section of the city controlled by House Wavir. Give Mox a pound of salt and ten silvers, and he'll set you up with Asthira.

Use of psionic powers or magical spells to extract the information from Toraus is also another way to learn where Asthira is located. The ex-templar has no particular defense against such intrusion, though he becomes aware of the mental invasion. In this case Toraus then pleads with the **PCs** for the coin he'll need to leave the city (see above), explaining that Asthira will want him dead if she learns of his disloyalty. This is what he believes to be true, though the truth is that it is not the case.

18. ASSASSINS

The **PCs** should be careful of what they divulge as to why they're in Balic and what they're searching for. Like the ex-templar Roal in Raam, divulging too much information to the wrong people usually leads to trouble. Although members of House Wavir would not kill to obtain the *pearl*, some ex-templars and members of House Tomblador and House Rees assuredly would. Unless a person was a trusted high templar of Andropinis they would have never heard of the artifact, let alone know what a "pearl" is (remember that pearls are indigenous to oceans which have not existed for over 15 millennia). On the other hand, mention of a powerful artifact of the sorcerer-monarch Andropinis would open more than a few eyes to what the **PCs** are doing. The most likely outcome of such attention takes the form of an ambush carried out by mercenaries.

The mercenaries attack with surprise from a distance using poison darts from a side alley. If the **PCs** close the distance, they will discover a larger number of mercenaries hidden and waiting in a small plaza at the end of the alley.

Assassin (6): hp 34 each

19. THE LAZY MEKILLOT

Located in the central section of Balic controlled by House Wavir, the Lazy Mekillot (see [Map 3: The Lazy Mekillot Inn](#)) is an extremely clean, higher-class establishment catering mostly to patricians, traders, and mercenaries in the service of Lord Tabaros. Others are welcome, but the inflated prices tend to keep the riffraff away for the majority of the time, as do malevolent looks by patrons when the "unwanted element" enters. This could mean the **PCs** should they present themselves as crude, ill-mannered folk.

The Lazy Mekillot is managed by a systematic dwarf named Dillge, who does everything from bartending, to cooking, to personally waiting on important-looking customers (or just those spending large amounts of money). Dillge is often assisted by a human boy called Mich, an orphan Dillge found rummaging through his garbage after the sorcerer-monarch was imprisoned. Mich is an ex-slave whose cruel patrician owners were killed in the riots two years ago.

If asked about who owns the Lazy Mekillot, Dillge tells the PCs he does not know. In fact, the owner of the tavern is none other than the bouncer Mox the half-giant. Though he plays a dull-witted brute who does nothing more than watch the front door and walk home drunk traders, Mox is actually a very powerful psion who has a network of connections and allies throughout the city. Mox serves no merchant house, finding it more profitable to use his formidable powers to work for himself. The hidden templars is one of the groups of contacts Mox has. His other acquaintances range from slave tribes to defilers to assassins, all of which come to the Lazy Mekillot to meet with the doltish half-giant appearing to be a servant of a powerful psion who then points them in the right direction—for a price. With the exception of Dillge, only a handful of people are aware of Mox's inventive ploy.

Dealing with Mox

Without the proper presentation to Mox (a pound of salt and 10 silver pieces), he ignores the PCs' request for information. Mox is not easily intimidated nor is he hotheaded. He ignores verbal threats and challenges by the PCs if they make any, but he will take an interest in them and use his *dorje of read thoughts* to learn more from a PC who does not appear to be a manifester or spellcaster about the reason for their behavior.

If the PCs present a pound of salt and 10 silver pieces to Mox: If the PCs have given Mox no cause for concern, and the proper

"payment" is given, the half-giant can lead them to the hidden location of the templars of Andropinis. Read or paraphrase the following:

After giving the salt and silver pieces to the half-giant he replies, "Mox's boss tells Mox to take you to pretty lady Asthira for giving me this ... right? <pause> Mox know these things because Mox is smart and sneaky when it comes to these things. You follow Mox through dark tunnels and he take you to hidden place of pretty lady Asthira and more of Mox's friends ... OK? But must leave now because pretty lady not be there later ... Ok?"

If the PCs agree to go with Mox, he will lead them to the northern edge of the city, where there is a hidden transporter gate – a permanent *passwall* spell that can be triggered by those selected by Asthira and who know the proper command word.

You follow the half-giant Mox through several alleyways behind the Lazy Mekillot, coming to a dead-end near the northern edge of the city. Mox whispers a word that is hard to make out, then says "Follow Mox quickly. Just walk into the wall like Mox does ..." and the half-giant steps into the adobe wall and disappears.

The transporter gate which Mox steps through is only open for one minute, and anyone not entering before that time is left behind. Even if the PCs can figure out what the word was Mox whispered to the gate to cause it to activate (**Listen DC 30** to hear the word – "elftrick"), it does not work for the characters – only for Mox or others attuned to the gate's magical power. Once all of the PCs (who are going to) step through the gate, continue with encounter **20. ASTHIRA**.

20. ASTHIRA

This encounter takes place if the PCs follow Mox through the transporter gate as described in encounter **19. THE LAZY MEKILLOT**. Read or paraphrase the following:

After stepping through the gate you feel a moment of disorientation, then find yourself in a damp underground chamber filled with bright magical globes of light. The chamber appears to be hand-carved from solid rock, and several tunnels can be seen branching off into the darkness. Suddenly, from the darkness surrounding the edge of the chamber emerge a dozen black robed figures. As they step from the shadows a chill fills the air – a cold, unfriendly feeling that makes you more than a little uncomfortable. One of the figures, which you can see is female due to the curves in her robe, steps slightly from the shadows and declares, “I am Asthira, First Templar of Andropinis. I did not summon you, yet you knew the proper tribute to have Mox bring you here. Why do you seek us out?”

This is the contact the PCs have been looking for, their only means of contacting Andropinis. From here on in it’s best if the PCs are honest with



Asthira, as they and their master have the same interests in preventing Dregoth’s plans. Any aggressive action on the part of the PCs at this point ends all hopes of contacting Andropinis and finding the Pearl of the Sunrise Sea. Asthira knows nothing about the location of the Pearl of the Sunrise Sea, though her master did speak of it to her once long ago.

If the PCs have told Asthira of the pearl, Dregoth, and the information provided by the other sorcerer-monarchs, Asthira reveals how to contact Andropinis. Through the use of abilities available only to shadow wizards and shadow templars, Asthira is able to contact Andropinis for limited amounts of time.

Asthira steps closer to speak, her face still shrouded in the folds of her robe’s hood, “I know of both the pearl and the Dread Lord,” she says, “but I know not where the artifact is. Locating it would mean contacting my master in the Black. Oh yes, we can speak with him, if only for short periods of time. Many of us have learned the ways of the Black since our master was imprisoned there by the First Sorcerer. We’ll help you – provided we have your word you’ll return the pearl to us should you survive your confrontation with Dregoth. Swear to this, or I shall not contact my master for you. Refuse, and you shall never have it.”

Asthira’s terms are non-negotiable. The First Templar uses *geas/quest* to force the PCs’ compliance. She will also turn to any lawful good members of the party for additional non-magical oaths. Presenting the PCs with the pearl is extremely trusting of Asthira, an act that is very non-characteristic of a templar or high standing. The truth of the matter is that Asthira is no fool and knows that Athas is in great danger. She is hoping that the foolish honor of one or two PCs will bring the pearl back to her if her spells don’t. Should the oath of returning the pearl be broken, the Templars of Andropinis do not forget the PC’s indignity if they ever meet again. Once at least one PC has promised to return the pearl and been subjected to *geas/quest*, Asthira continues:

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Your word given, Asthira steps forward and pulls back the hood of her robe. You stand in shock as the head and arms of the First Templar are nothing more than the darkest shadow. It is almost as if she is not there, an obscure outline of her former self. "You seem shocked at my appearance," she chuckles, "It is the price I paid to become a shadowcaster powerful enough to contact my master. Now stand ready, interaction with Andropinis shall only last a few minutes."

Asthira then begins to chant, causing the bright lights in the chamber to dim slightly. Throwing a silvery substance into the air and pulling her robes tight, her entire body seems to become nothing more than shadow. A moment later the shadow alters its shape to a height of eight feet and nearly doubling in size. The large shadow quickly loses its female form, becoming that of a well-muscled man. "I am Andropinis, sorcerer-monarch of Balic. Who are you to waste the power of my templars, and for what reason do you disturb my agonizing imprisonment?"

Asthira has used her *shadespeaker* ability to temporarily exchange her shadow for that of Andropinis. This artful use of the ability allows the **PCs** to speak with Andropinis through Asthira for 7 minutes to inform the sorcerer-monarch of their needs. The sorcerer-monarch's mention of wasting the templar's power refers to the fact that this ability can only be used once per day and for a limited time that is normally precious to the imprisoned Champion.

As with Asthira the **PCs'** best bet is to come clean, telling Andropinis everything they know to this point regarding Dregoth and the artifacts they've been charged with retrieving. Once the **PCs** have explained the situation to him, Andropinis replies:

"So," muses the shadow of the sorcerer-monarch, "Dregoth does still live. We had suspected as much for centuries. Of all the Champions of Rajaat, Gallard's proficiency with magic is the greatest, and if he believes there is a threat to Athas then it must be true. Even in the Black I have felt the obstruction of energy from the Inner Planes, and your tale conveniently solves for me that enigma."

"You are brave in wishing to confront Dregoth," continues Andropinis, "and the Pearl of the Sunrise Sea should assist you in your efforts. Rajaat had told me it was an item from the Blue Age, empowered by exposure to the energies of the Pristine Tower for thousands of years. After years of possessing the pearl I discovered that it protected me from even the most powerful of psionic disciplines, but in turn took such power from you. In the end, I sequestered the artifact so it could not be used against me by disloyal subjects. It remains where I placed it two centuries ago, and I will have Asthira retrieve it for you. My fellow Champions are correct, the Dread Lord must be stopped at all costs. But be warned, you have sworn to return the pearl to my templars should you survive. Rajaat's spell will not hold me here much longer, and should you violate your oath you shall earn the eternal antipathy of Andropinis."

The **PCs** have a few minutes before Andropinis, and he can attempt to answer questions regarding the pearl. He is aware of all the item's powers, which he can relate. In addition, the shade of the sorcerer-monarch lies to the **PCs** and tells them of a terrible curse that accompanies the pearl — this in addition to the loss of psionic powers. He says this curse would eventually result in the death of the possessor and all around him (the **DM** is allowed to be creative here, playing on the fears of individual **PCs** in the group). This lie is to help insure the **PCs** return the pearl should they survive their attack on Dregoth.

Unless the **PCs** treat Andropinis with extreme disrespect, Asthira retrieves the pearl for them after the conversation with her liege is over. Where the pearl is hidden remains a secret between Andropinis and Asthira, as the **PCs** must wait in the underground chamber until the First Templar returns. Any attempts to magically or psionically try to find the location of the pearl fail. Once the **PCs** have the *Pearl of the Sunrise Sea* in their possession, Asthira reactivates the gate they came through and she sends the party back to the streets of Balic.

Asthira: hp 116

Shadow Templar (11): hp 67 each

Aftermath

From here the **PCs** can travel to Cromlin, Raam, or begin their journey to New Giustenal if they possess all three artifacts (or as many as they have managed to collect before they run out of time). Perhaps the easiest way of traveling to Cromlin is by booking passage on a silt skimmer. The **DM** can increase the perils of such a journey by adding encounters with giants, silt horrors or other dangers.

If the **PCs** are on good terms with House Wavir or Rees, they can purchase psionic or magical one-use *teleport* items to speed their travels. House Wavir sells these items for 1.25 times the listed price, while House Rees charges 1.5 times the listed price.

Mox the half-giant can also be of help if the **PCs** want to get in touch with spellcasters or manifesters for hire. Mox usually charges a fee of 10 silver pieces to put the **PCs** in touch with an **NPC** spellcaster or manifester who charges the listed price for his or her services. However, if the **PCs** threatened Mox or were otherwise impolite, the price has doubled to 20 silver pieces.

The Scorcher

Discarded by Hamanu in the 164th King's Age following the first death of Dregoth, the *Scorcher* rested at the bottom of the Silt Sea somewhere off the coast of Lake Island for nearly 2,000 years. Like many of Rajaat's creations, the *Scorcher* was deemed too powerful by the sorcerer-monarchs and was best hidden from mortal eyes lest they be used against them. For 20 centuries the *Scorcher* rested beneath tons of silt until it was unexpectedly swallowed by a silt

horror. Shortly after that the creature was slain, as it attacked the village of Cromlin, by an ex-gladiator mul named Vorr, who stumbled upon the blade in the horror's gullet.

Using the sword's power, Vorr wielded the *Scorcher* in defense of the free men of the Tablelands for several years, preventing raiders from both Nibenay and Raam from enslaving the innocents of the Ivory Triangle. With the considerable might of the *Scorcher* Vorr drew the attention of the Shadow King, as well as others in the area. Just as Nibenay was to mount an expedition against the ex-gladiator, Vorr suddenly disappeared from the face of Athas.

In truth, Vorr was slain 85 years ago by one of the most powerful creatures on Athas, a nightmare beast. While traveling through the Valley of Trevain looking for slave raiders, the mul stumbled upon the beast as it was headed for the village of Cromlin, which was his home. In a horrendous battle Vorr was killed by the creature, who took his body back to its lair on the edge of the Black Spine Mountains. Vorr was never seen from again.

The conclusion of the battle, however, was witnessed by a lone nomad, a young female elf by the name of Shimmer traveling from Fort Inix to Cromlin on business for House Shom. She watched in horror as the nightmare beast dragged Vorr and his weapon towards the verge of the Black Spine Mountains, where it disappeared amongst the crags and ravines. Shimmer told her story to a Master Trader of House Shom, who discounted her ramblings and dismissed her from his service. Now over 120 years old Shimmer is a member of the slave tribe Tenpug's Band, being taken in by its mul leader because of her skill in weaving clothes.

To find the *Scorcher*, the **PCs** must find Shimmer. This is done by traveling to Cromlin and inquiring as to Vorr's whereabouts. Eventually Shimmer's name turns up. She hasn't been seen for many

years, and those who did know her believe her to be dead of old age long ago. Eventually the PCs do make contact with a member of Tenpug's Band that knows Shimmer is still alive, and if they are not deemed to be dangerous to the slave tribe they'll be lead to her. With Shimmer's information the PCs will have a good idea of where to begin their search for the ancient weapon.

The Gray Death

The Gray Death is the name of the condition brought about from the airborne silt near the Silt Sea. Creatures suffer a -2 penalty to initiative, attack and damage rolls, as well as Spot checks. Each hour there is a 30% chance the wind increases, doubling the penalties to -4. Wearing a moist scarf halves the penalties caused by the Gray Death. By seeking shelter inside a building, cave etc. the full penalty is negated.

Status of Cromlin

Cromlin is a trading village established by House Shom of Nibenay by the Silt Sea. Despite its location, a great deal of trade passes through Cromlin, supported by both House Shom and House M'ke of Raam. Silt skimmers travel the shoals between Cromlin and Break Shore across the bay, cutting travel time considerably between the two areas. Navigators who can make the journey are few, and their price is high for such travel. Cromlin is one of the last truly profitable outposts for House Shom, and many in the village work for the traders here in one form or another.

The people of Cromlin are shady at best, and many of them are thieves or exiles of one type or another. Unless it interferes with trading operations, authorities (owned by House Shom) tend to turn a blind eye to unlawful activities. Aside from House Shom, the village is frequented by the Sky

Singer elves and members of the slave tribe Tenpug's Band who all bring goods to trade. Regardless of their origin or alliances, everyone in Cromlin is forced to wear a scarf of some sort across their mouth due to the Gray Death, caused by the constant silt blowing off the shores to the north. On a windy day most people stay inside to avoid the stinging silt.

Arrival in Cromlin

The PCs can approach Cromlin on foot, with magic or psionics, or by silt skimmer. Though not large in size (300 residents), Cromlin is a bustling village, and a locale that is often unsafe for strangers. The PCs are treated at best with indifference until they make friends or prove themselves in some fashion, the easiest being to win a brawl at the Dirty Lizard tavern. Another method for the PCs to get what they want is greasing the palms of various NPCs with coin, though this often results in characters getting accosted because of their wealth.

Below is a series of brief location descriptions in Cromlin as they're presented on [Map 2: Cromlin](#) along with encounter references.

- ◆ **Silt piers:** Traders arrive by silt skimmers from the Sea of Silt. So would the PCs if they booked passage on a silt skimmer in Balic. See encounter [22. SILT PIERS](#)
- ◆ **Homes:** Residential area. The PCs can obtain a clue that directs them to the Dirty Lizard. See encounter [23. HOMES](#).
- ◆ **Dirty Lizard:** The only tavern in Cromlin. If the PCs can prove their worth, this is the best place in Cromlin to glean information regarding Vorr and the Scorcher. See encounter [24. DIRTY LIZARD](#).
- ◆ **Marketplace:** Here the PCs can come into contact with the trader Gessnic, who can lead them to Tenpug's Band and Shimmer. See encounter [25. MARKETPLACE](#).
- ◆ **Shom lodge:** This is the only place one can buy water in Cromlin. The PCs can meet the

overseer Siln and the master trader Crost. See encounter 26. **SHOM LODGE**.

◆ **Shom barracks**: Shom guards, lowly traders and hired mercenaries dwell here. See encounter 26. **SHOM LODGE**.

◆ **Shom warehouse**: This area is heavily guarded by members of House Shom. It is full of trade goods. The **PCs** are not allowed inside the building under any circumstance. See encounter 28. **SHOM WAREHOUSE**.

◆ **M'ke lodge**: The **PCs** can come into contact with Brodden, the trader in charge of House M'ke's endeavors in Cromlin. See encounter 29. **M'KE LODGE**.

21. INFORMATION

The **PCs** will need to gather information on Vorr or the Scorcher to learn about Shimmer and her current location. As in other sections of the adventure, gathering information through roleplaying can generate the same or better results than a simple **Gather Information** skill check. Information from a **Gather Information** roll is limited to the information below.

DC 5: Strangers won't get far in Cromlin without coin or respect.

DC 10: Most traders looking for information inquire at the Shom lodge or the Dirty Lizard tavern.

DC 15: Vorr was a freedom fighter who disappeared more than a King's Age ago.

DC 20: Vorr wielded a red sword that, according to the legend, burnt with black flames. The sword disappeared with him.

DC 25: Jaksot Han, an ex-pirate, has lived in Cromlin longer than most. He can be found at the Dirty Lizard tavern.

DC 30: An elven woman claimed to have witnessed Vorr's death, but she hasn't been seen for many years.

DC 35: The elf woman's name is Shimmer.

DC 40: If she is still alive, Shimmer lives with Tenpug's Band, a slave tribe whose members come to trade in Cromlin.

22. SILT PIERS

Traders arrive by silt skimmers from the Sea of Silt. So would the **PCs** if they booked passage on a silt skimmer in Balic.

The unique piers of Cromlin extend 20 feet above the silt, allowing the giant skimmers to unload their goods and personnel quickly and easily. The piers themselves are made from agafari from the Crescent Forest, at great cost to House Shom. Each pier is either owned or rented by private citizens, though several of them belong to House Shom and House M'ke. Normally there are one to six skimmers here at all times, most with small crews looking for hands to hire on for a voyage. At the base of the center most pier is a small building where a member of House Shom logs in and collects fees from skimmers entering and leaving Cromlin.

With the near destruction of Raam and the presence of Dregoth's army in this part of the Silt Sea, the piers are full of ships whose captains are still afraid to leave port. Because of the presence of House M'ke, knowledge of the attack on Raam has spread quickly. At this point all vessels are remaining idle until House Shom makes a decision on whether or not to resume trade.

If the **PCs ask about Vorr or the Scorcher:** No one here remembers or has ever heard of Vorr or anyone wielding a sword fitting the description of the Scorcher. Most people here suggest the **PCs** inquire at the **House Shom lodge**, the **Marketplace**, or the **Dirty Lizard** tavern. The latter is met with a chuckle from some of the more seasoned sailors.

23. HOMES

This cluster of homes varies from crude mud structures to elaborate constructions of stone and agafari wood, though there are only a few of the later. The majority of the people who live here consist of humans and

exiled elves, in addition to a smattering of other races. There are no street patrols or other authoritative forces defending citizens, so visitors who venture into the darker alleyways had best be prepared for the worse. The DM is free to run encounters with 2d4+2 local thugs.

Village Tough Elf: hp 12 each

Village Tough Human: hp 15 each

If the PCs ask about Vorr or the Scorcher:

Many of the common folk who live here want nothing to do with strangers, and questions regarding the man who found the Scorcher more than a King's age ago are often met with shrugged shoulders. No one the PCs speak with here was alive when the weapon was found. If villagers are bribed with 10 ceramic pieces, they tell the PCs to ask Jaksot Han, an ex-pirate at the **Dirty Lizard** tavern, as he has lived in Cromlin longer than most.

24. DIRTY LIZARD

This large tavern is Cromlin's only source of enjoyment in the usually boring trading village. The tavern is owned and operated by a 60 year old ex-silt pirate named Jaksot Han, who started the business after losing his right eye in a raid. Unfortunately, the Dirty Lizard (see [Map 4: The Dirty Lizard Inn](#)) has become a place where fights and drunken arguments break out on a regular basis, and has become a way for the locals to test the abilities of newcomers.

The capacity of the silt piers is reflected at the Dirty Lizard. Normally the common room of the tavern contains a collection of 30-40 sailors, merchants, thieves, con artists, and free citizens drinking the fermented kank honey-mead the Dirty Lizard is known for. However, because of Dregoth's attack on Raam there is near 70 people packed in the building, and boredom is beginning to set in. This situation is nothing more than a brawl waiting to happen.

As the PCs enter the Dirty Lizard they're met with a combination of blank, disapproving stares and boisterous insults, most of which become extremely personal and impolite. Some sample insults are provided.

- You lookin' for some action? Because I hear this breeder's lookin' for somethin' to pair up his kank with.
- Look at 'em, all skin and bones. They wouldn't last a minute in a fight.
- I don't know what they are, but those are some ugly creatures. Monsters probably run away from 'em screamin'... and that smell!
- You're some tender little erdlu meat I'd like to sink my teeth in.

If the PCs choose to ignore the crowd, they'll get no information out of them regarding the whereabouts of the Scorcher. Inquiries as to the location of Jaksot Han are ignored, even by the bartender and serving maids. In truth, Jaksot is sleeping off yesterday's activities in a back room, and does not awake unless a brawl begins.

Dirty Lizard Human Brawler (3): hp 37 each

Dirty Lizard Elf Brawler (3): hp 25 each

Dirty Lizard Half-giant Brawler (2): hp 66 each

The DM should make an effort to get the PCs involved in a brawl at the Dirty Lizard, as it is the easiest way to get the information they require. If a fight breaks out, it begins with up to six drunken opponents against the party, but there is a 75% chance for most of the entire tavern to get involved in a free-for-all, where each PC will be squaring off against 1-3 opponents at a time. The DM is encouraged to use a variety of opponents, such as **Village Toughs** and **Shom Traders** in addition to more Dirty Lizard Brawlers. None of the other patrons use weapons or magic of any kind. This is strictly a hand-and-foot altercation, though occasionally an elf will draw a bone puchik to slide into an

opponent's ribs. The free-for-all lasts for a total of 10 rounds before people either cool off or are passed out.

If the PCs ask about Vorr or the Scorcher:

If the PCs manage to come out on top of the Dirty Lizard brawl without killing or seriously crippling too many of the patrons, they will have proven themselves to the crowd and can obtain valuable clues.

While most of the patrons know nothing of the ex-gladiator Vorr, the owner of the Dirty Lizard, Jaksot Han, does. Jaksot will have awoken from the noise of a fight and taken his place behind the counter. The DM may wish to set a price for Jaksot's information, though not more than 200 ceramic pieces. When the PCs locate Jaksot and question him about Vorr or the Scorcher, read or paraphrase the following:

"I remember the stories about the ex-gladiator who found a powerful sword," says Jaksot, "his name was Vorr and he was a mul. My father used to tell tales of how Vorr used a mighty weapon that burned with black flames to kill slave raiders across the Ivory Triangle. For years he reveled in slaughtering templars from both Raam and Nibenay, and the descendants of several freed slaves still live in Cromlin. Then one day he left to confront a group of raiders said to be sent from Nibenay to kill him, and he never returned. My father always told me he killed one hundred of the Shadow King's most powerful priestesses before they brought him down. That was the last anyone ever saw of him."

Rubbing his chin, Jaksot adds, "I do seem to remember a story told to me by my elf nanny when I asked her about the legend of Vorr. Her name was Shimmer, and she told me Vorr was killed by a nightmare beast who dragged the mul to its lair to feast on him, the magical sword still locked in his grasp. The last I had heard Shimmer was living with Tenpug's slave tribe to the west, if she's still alive. She was well over 100 years old last time I saw her, and that was a decade ago. That's all I know."

Jaksot does not know where Vorr confronted the nightmare beast, nor where the creature's lair is located. If it's the truth,

then that information is known only to Shimmer. Though members of a slave tribe, Jaksot explains that people from Tenpug's Band freely come to Cromlin to sell their wares and purchase goods. Since this has been to the benefit of House Shom, who resells their goods in other cities for a hefty profit, the Master Trader has given them free access to the village despite being declared outlaws in Gulg and Nibenay.

Jaksot knows the general direction of the tribe - west, though he suggests that it would be safer to be lead there by one of its members or associates. For the price of minimum 20 ceramic pieces, he offers up the name of a human trader named Gessnic, who can be found in the [Marketplace](#). This trader travels regularly to Tenpug's secret location, and can take the party there.

25. MARKETPLACE

This section of the village is where merchants from the Ivory Triangle are allowed to set up their booths from sunrise to sunset. A fence of stacked stones surrounds the area, and it is a simple matter to break through it for whatever reason. There are also a dozen guards from House Shom here to keep the peace at all times.

Once a week, Master Trader Crost of House Shom personally visits each merchant to take 10% of their weekly profits. Woe to anyone foolish enough to try and cross House Shom, as they have agents everywhere. Because of House Shom's cut there is a 10-15% markup over standard goods prices. Almost anything can be found here, including illegal items that aren't openly displayed, such as spell components. Elven vendors are more likely to possess these goods than others. The only thing not for sale here is water, which must be purchased directly from House Shom.

If the PCs ask about Vorr or the Scorcher:

None of the merchants know of Vorr or the Scorcher. However, if the PCs have spoken

to Jaksot, it's a simple matter to find Gessnic's booth by asking any of the other merchants or inquiring with the guards. A middle-aged human male, Gessnic deals in the buying and reselling of goods that are either in high demand or are difficult to find in certain areas. If questioned about Vorr or the Scorcher, Gessnic knows nothing. If asked about Shimmer and how the PCs can contact her, he replies:

"So you wish to meet the old seamstress," retorts the merchant, "that is easier said than done. Tenpug is wary of strangers, and his trust is difficult to earn. Perhaps if you have something of value to donate to the tribe, something extraordinary, I could escort you there and put in a good word for you. Tenpug is a fanatic for finely crafted art and other items, and those with the skills to create them. If you present such a thing to Tenpug in my name, I'll take you there. Do we have a deal?"

Basically Gessnic wants the PCs to give something of value to Tenpug in his name to clear a debt for merchandise he has with the mul's slave tribe, the total of which is 500 ceramic pieces. In this case payment may mean several different things, including weapons, magical items, gems or jewelry, but especially creative works of art which fetch a high price with nobles and templars in Nibenay who appreciate such items. Coin is also acceptable, though the PCs would have to pay more in this case, 750 ceramics, since there is no resale value.

If the PCs agree to Gessnic's terms, they can immediately begin their journey to Tenpug's location. If not, he wishes them luck in finding it on their own. Gessnic tends to avoid combative situations whenever possible and will hide behind the PCs if a battle breaks out.

Shom Guard (12): hp 49 each
Gessnic: hp 16

26. SHOM LODGE

This three-story building is the main complex for House Shom's dealings in Cromlin, and is extremely well fortified against both attacks and the harsh weather. A dozen officers and overseers assist Master Trader Crost in the trafficking of goods through Cromlin, with the weather keeping these men indoors most of the time. The building is typically guarded by two half-giants in the service of House Shom armed with obsidian-tipped impalers. Unless there is a member of House Shom waiting for someone at the front door, no one is allowed in.

Getting inside the Shom lodge:

Using magic or psionics to gain entrance is one possibility. Clever use of Bluff or Diplomacy can also lead to the PCs being allowed inside. Also, the guards will call for someone if the PCs say they've come to buy water. This is the only place in Cromlin where it's available. Such an act attracts the attention of a minor overseer named Siln who charges one silver piece for 25 gallons of water, but not less than five ceramic if the PCs haggle. If Siln becomes aware of PCs having much money, he raises the price to 10 silvers for 25 gallons.

Another way for the PCs to get the attention of House Shom is by relating the recent events in Raam. Facts concerning the city-state are of pivotal interest to Crost, and any information regarding the condition of the city is valuable. If the PCs offer an information trade to House Shom, they end up meeting personally with Master Trader Crost. The trader is willing to supply the PCs with either up to 50 gallons of water (bidding begins at 20 gallons) or supplies at standard list price for the information. He has little else to trade for the information, though he can also barter with future favors that can be integrated in the DM's campaign following this adventure.

If the PCs tell Crost that Dregoth's army has left Raam and convince him that it poses no

threat to silt skimmers traversing the Sea of Silt, he will consider opening trade routes soon or even immediately.

If the PCs ask about Vorr or the Scorcher:

None of the staff knows about Vorr or the Scorcher, except Crost. If the PCs trade information from Raam, he can relate the following to them in a dramatic oralization:

"I know a fair bit about the history of Cromlin" says Crost, "It was more than a King's age ago that the name of the mul Vorr was known to all in Cromlin, and feared by every slaver in the Ivory Triangle. He was a freedom fighter, an ex-gladiator who took it upon him to free all fellow slaves. Vorr was an experienced warrior from his years in the arena, but his true power came from his sword – the Scorcher, a blade wreathed in black flames. Rumors would have it the Shadow King took an interest in this blade and dispatched a force of slavers and templars to retrieve it. Vorr, however, did not fall into their trap. But he could not escape fate – his death came at the hands of the most powerful beast known to Athasian, the dreaded nightmare beast. According to a witness, whose name will cost you, the beast dragged Vorr off to its lair, his sword still stuck in his frozen grip of death."

Crost can give the PCs the name of Shimmer if they relate what they know about Raam, or are willing to pay 20 silvers or more. He will even throw in that she was the nanny of the owner of the Dirty Lizard, Jaksot Han when he was young. Crost doesn't know Shimmer's current whereabouts. She hasn't been seen for twenty years.

Hurdll Crost: hp 70

Siln: hp 14

Shom Guard (10): hp 49 each

Shom Half-giant Guard (2): hp 69 each

Shom Psion (1): hp 52

27. SHOM BARRACKS

The common guards and lower-level traders of House Shom dwell here. Crost keeps a minimum of 30 soldiers on the payroll at all times, and another dozen traders that often

accompany caravans across the Tablelands. In addition, Crost tends to have higher-level mercenaries on hand for some of the more "difficult" jobs his regular soldiers can't handle, and these NPCs are given free boarding here. Unless the party is directly working for House Shom, they are not allowed in this building.

If the PCs ask about Vorr or the Scorcher:

Many of the hired hands come from Nibenay, and those from Cromlin haven't heard about Vorr or the Scorcher. However, for 10 ceramic pieces, a hired hand will tell the PCs that trade master Crost knows all that goes on in Cromlin worth knowing. He can be found at the [Shom lodge](#).

If the PCs cause problems at the [Marketplace](#), [Shom warehouse](#) or [Shom lodge](#), reinforcements will be dispatched from the barracks.

Shom Cleric (1): hp 47

Shom Defiler (1): hp 24

Shom Guard (15): hp 49 each

Shom Psion (2): hp 52 each

Shom Trader (12): hp 28 each

28. SHOM WAREHOUSE

This area is heavily guarded by members of House Shom, and only the orders of Master Trader Hurdll Crost can open the doors of the warehouse. There are currently 10 men guarding the warehouse around the clock. This is five times the normal patrol for the building, and rumors abound as to exactly what is being stored within. In truth, due to skimmer inactivity the building is full to the brim with goods destined for Raam and Draj, a veritable fortune in wood, copper, iron, and other various products. Because of this, Crost has increased protection on the warehouse until some of the goods can be routed to other cities, or until he deems it safe to travel across the Silt Sea again.

If the PCs ask about Vorr or the Scorcher:

Questions raised here regarding Vorr or the Scorcher are met with a negative shake of the head. Inquiries are referred to the House Shom lodge or the Dirty Lizard Tavern. The guards have orders not to engage in lengthy conversation with anyone.

Shom Guard (8): hp 49 each

Shom Psion (2): hp 52 each

29. M'KE LODGE

Unlike House Shom, the traders of House M'ke maintain a small presence in Cromlin. For the most part House M'ke is present here to exchange goods coming from Raam to caravans headed southwest and to trade directly with House Shom. The house also makes profit from silt skimmer construction and repairs.

Shipments expected from Raam are now dangerously overdue because of Dregoth's attack, which has a cascade effect on clientele who rely on this trading connection to obtain goods, including House Shom. Consequently, the DM should adjust the prices of silver, silk, and cloth for all cities, villages and forts in the Ivory Triangle.

House M'ke's interests in Cromlin are governed by Garreth Brodden, who is presently very concerned regarding news of Raam. Unless the PCs bear a message from his superiors to the north or have facts on the situation, he has no time to speak with them. If the PCs do present Garreth with information regarding Raam, he offers them in return goods at list price, up to 200 Cp (initial offer of 50 Cp) in coin, or as a last resort a *potion of silt breathing*.

If the PCs ask about Vorr or the Scorcher:

No one at the M'ke lodge has any information of value regarding Vorr or the Scorcher, including Garreth. He points the PCs to the Dirty Lizard tavern, the gathering point in Cromlin.

30. TENPUG'S BAND

Located 15 miles west of Cromlin is the hidden location of Tenpug's Band, established in the half-buried ruins of an ancient temple. The blowing sands and storms off the Silt Sea help to conceal the ruins from passing travelers, though the tribe's location itself is remote enough to deter visitors.

Tenpug's Band is a slave tribe primarily made up of former artists and artisans slaves who use their talents to create and sell wares in small villages and caravan camps across the Ivory Triangle. These former slaves pose as freemen, and any profit brought back is shared with the rest of the tribe. Very few members of the tribe are actually skilled warriors, though Tenpug has recently noticed the need for protection and has been inviting those with combat skills he encounters to join him.

Finding Tenpug's Band

If the PCs have employed the help of the trader Gessnic, he can lead them straight to the tribe after about a half day of travel. If the party does not have the trader's help and has never visited Tenpug's Band before, there is a cumulative 10% chance per day's worth of search to find the hidden temple. This factor could prove to be an excessive waste of the PC's time in regards to the adventure as a whole.

One mile from the ruins, the PCs will encounter Tenpug himself and 15 of his warriors. Read or paraphrase the following:

Passing through a boulder field, you become aware that you are not alone. A group of armed men and women appear from behind the rocks around you, forming a half-circle preventing your advancement. You count more than a dozen warriors. A one-armed mul brandishing an iron war hammer steps forward. "State your business out here, travelers."

If the PCs have positively interacted with Tenpug's Band in the past, dealings with them are bound to be easier than if there is ill will between them.

If the PCs have agreed to approach Tenpug with Gessnic's "angle," the mul ex-gladiator accepts the offer and agrees to lead the PCs where Shimmer teaches her craft to young members of the tribe.

If the PCs have not been accompanied by Gessnic, dealings with Tenpug begin with an encounter reaction of *cautious indifferent*, with the confrontation quickly turning to *unfriendly* or *hostile* if any aggressive measures are shown by the PCs. If the PCs say they are looking for Shimmer, he wants further information. If the PCs appear trustworthy, Tenpug could lead them to Shimmer. Always prudent regarding dealings with strangers, Tenpug doesn't want to take the chance the PCs are actually templars or some other extension of the sorcerer-monarch's power that has come to return them to the slave pens. Tenpug may even go so far as to blindfold the PCs and take away their weapons before taking them to his base of operations. The DM is the final judge as to dealings with Tenpug and his warriors, and is encouraged not to make it too easy for the PCs.

Once the PCs agree to Tenpug's terms, Tenpug leads them to the hidden temple and the elf Shimmer. Tenpug and his warriors accompany the PCs at all times.

Tenpug: hp 72

Warrior of Tenpug's Band: hp 42 each

31. SHIMMER

If Tenpug agrees to allow the PCs to speak with Shimmer, they are lead through the desert to the camp. Tenpug's Band consists of over 200 members, most of which are artisan ex-slaves that happily work day and night at their craft to benefit the rest of the tribe. The tribe's location consists of the

ruined temple and a few nearby tents hidden from view to the south by large sand dunes. Inside the ruined temple the PCs can find Shimmer.

Tenpug and his warriors lead you over dune after dune of sand until you eventually arrive at the tribe's secret location. Partially buried beneath several tons of sand you see the protruding ruins that are the tribe's home. After passing through the stone doors, you see the interior is bustling with people crafting pots, knitting cloths, hammering jewelry, and a thousand other duties in their effort to produce works of art. Pausing to take in the activity, you continue behind the one-armed mul to a corner of the ruin containing several finely crafted articles of clothing both of elegant design as well as those practical for desert travel. Here Tenpug stops and says, "Old mother, there are people here to see you. They wish to know about Vorr."

From the shadows of the corner emerges one of the oldest people you're every likely to see aside from a sorcerer-monarch. The elf's skin is wrinkled beyond belief, and her hands resemble gnarled agafari roots. She pauses from her sewing, squinting with her eyes as she glances your way. "Vorr ...," she croaks amidst a short cough, "that is a name I have not heard spoken in a long time. Why do you wish to know about Vorr? Speak the truth," she suddenly proclaims in a solid voice, "for these old ears know a lie when they hear one."

The PCs must present a reason for wanting this information, and though the truth may not be believed it is better than a lie. Shimmer assumes the party is in search of Vorr's powerful weapon, and is surprised that over the years no one else has approached her. Shimmer possesses the wild talent *empathy* and with it she has a total bonus of +17 to *Sense Motive* checks, giving her a fair chance to detect if she is being lied to.

If the PCs are foolish enough to be caught lying to the old elf she refuses to help them from that moment on, since to Shimmer, to have someone who is false possess the Scorcher is just as bad as having it fall into the possession of a sorcerer-monarch.

Unscrupulous characters may also try to extract the information from Shimmer through magical or psionic power. Though this may succeed, if Shimmer detects the intrusion, she immediately informs Tenpug of the trickery. This results in instant hostile actions by Tenpug and his warriors.



It is best if the PCs tell the truth (or at least a portion of it), though it is difficult to believe. The PCs may opt to omit portions of the story, especially their dealings with the sorcerer-monarchs. Regardless, Shimmer will agree to help, but Tenpug will become more suspicious of the PCs if they tell of their dealings with the sorcerer-monarchs. Once the PCs have told the truth or a very convincing lie, continue with the following:

"The foolish Master Trader discounted my story years ago," begins the elderly elf, "dismissing me from House Shom as if I were some crazy person. In truth he was probably glad to hear that Vorr was dead, since the ex-gadiator hampered his dealings with Nibenay by killing slavers. It has been a long time since he was slain you know ... well over a King's Age ago. I know you care not for a mul ex-slave, but the sword which made him invincible. He was said to have killed over a

thousand slavers with his great weapon, but in truth it was more like a hundred. It doesn't matter now, for after I'm gone none will remember him.

"I watched him die fighting a nightmare beast," continues Shimmer, her face etched with a distant stare into the past, "and for a time it actually looked as if he would kill the terrible creature, but in the end the monster prevailed. The beast dragged Vorr's body and his sword back to what I thought to be its lair, a cave on the eastern face of a mountain, and neither was ever seen from again. I never had any use for such a weapon, though I knew someone would some day..."

After taking a deep breath and a drink of water offered by Tenpug, she concludes, "The mountain you seek is the northernmost of the Black Spine, in the northwestern portion of the Valley of Trevain. Unless the creature carried the sword elsewhere, that is where it should be."

That is all Shimmer knows regarding the weapon. In all her years she has not heard of anyone else finding the sword, nor has anyone specifically asked her about it until today. Before the PCs leave the temple, Shimmer has one last word for them:

"One last thing before you leave." implores Shimmer, "I knew Vorr for a time before, and after he came into possession of the sword. I swear by Ral that the item carries a terrible curse of some sort, for Vorr was never the same after the day he pulled that weapon out from a silt horror's belly. When you're done with the blasted weapon ... throw it back in the Silt Sea, or it will kill you as surely as it did him."

If the PCs have remained on good terms with Tenpug, he offers to have one of his scouts guide them to the general location described by Shimmer. The journey is roughly 15 miles from Tenpug's Band, and if the day is late the mul suggests the PCs spend the night in the warmth of the temple rather than the cold night. If relations with Tenpug have remained cautious for the entire encounter, he points the party in the general direction of the mountain and bids them a curt farewell.

Illus. by Tony Lone Fight

32. VALLEY OF TREVAIN

The Valley of Trevain rests east of the main group of the Black Spine mountains, directly south of the village of Cromlin. The Valley of Trevain is roughly 10 square miles of rocky badlands, much of which contains a variety of dangerous plants and smaller predators that also serve as prey to larger creatures that come down from the mountains to hunt. The DM is free to use random encounters suitable for mountains and rocky badlands while the PCs travel through this area.

If the PCs have been supplied with information by Shimmer, they can easily locate the monster's lair after only a few hours of searching the area. If not, there is a cumulative 10% chance per day of locating the lair. In this case the PCs would be leaving no stone unturned, and thus the chance for random encounters is doubled. The mountain the PCs search for has never been given a specific name, and no longer contains the creatures it did long ago. However, the Scorcher can still be found hidden in the nightmare beast's former home.

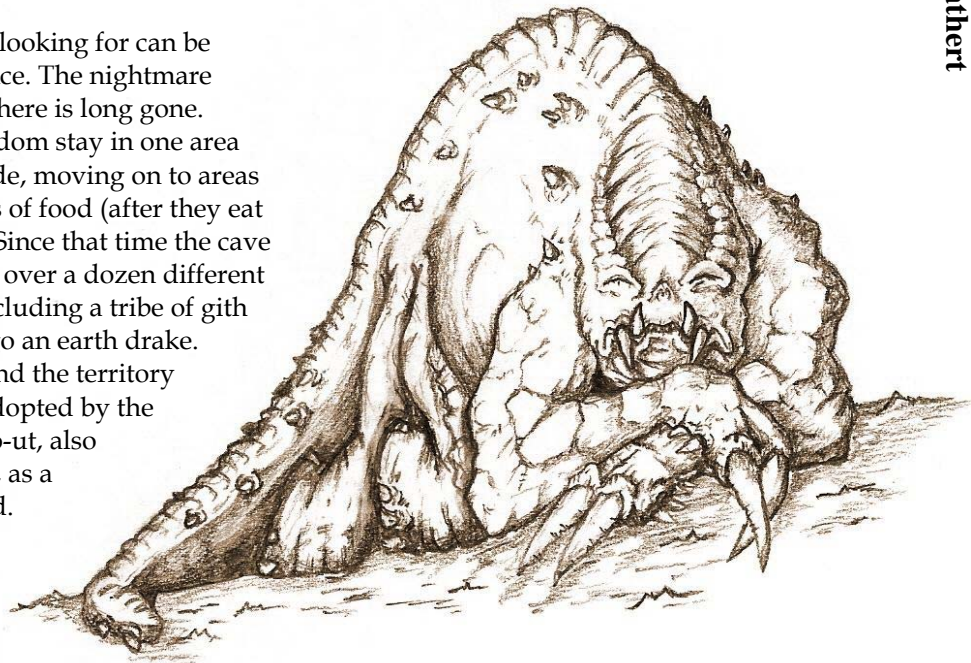
The cave the PCs are looking for can be spotted from a distance. The nightmare beast that once lived here is long gone. Nightmare beasts seldom stay in one area for more than a decade, moving on to areas with greater amounts of food (after they eat everything in sight). Since that time the cave has been the home to over a dozen different types of creatures, including a tribe of gith and until a decade ago an earth drake. Currently, the cave and the territory below it have been adopted by the local population of so-ut, also known as rampagers, as a yearly mating ground. Unfortunately for the PCs, that particular season is upon them. If the party

plays it smart, however, they may only have to face two of the creatures instead of a larger group of them. Read the following after the PCs find the lair:

The terrain surrounding the mountain indicated by Shimmer is jagged and uneven, and traveling through it is difficult and tiring. Locating the mountain is not a difficult task, and soon after the entrance to the lair comes into view up a small incline of rocky ground. As you approach the lair, however, you can see several large, heavily scaled, gray hexaped creatures prone at the base of the slope. Their twin foreclaws have talons the size of daggers. A hollow noise resembling snoring can be heard, while studying each of the beasts you notice slight movements from each of them. The only clear path to the lair is through the heart of the sleeping monsters.

The situation is this, there are eight so-ut "sleeping it off" just below the lair in the heat of the sun (this assumes the PCs approach during the day - at night the so-uts are awake), while two of the creatures are wide awake within the cave preparing to mate. The PCs may or may not recognize the so-ut for what they are. Even one can be a deadly opponent.

So-ut (Athasian rampager) (8): hp 161 each



Illus. by Christopher Rathert

As long as the **PCs** do not disturb the sleeping so-ut, they do not awake. In this case “disturb” means touching them, casting a spell upon them, speaking excessively loud, and of course attacking them. If the **PCs** are stupid enough to do any of the above mentioned things, all eight so-ut instantly rise and attack. Once the **PCs** get to the cave, which is 100 feet away up the cliff, noise no longer awakes the creatures. The climb up the cliff requires a **Climb skill check** (DC 13) to successfully scale. If the check is failed by 5 or more, the **PC** plummets down the slope taking **2d6** points of damage and has a 50% chance to wake the sleeping so-ut.

Once the **PCs** reach the cave they will encounter the two so-ut that are feasting here. Because of their special senses, the creatures will know if the **PCs** are approaching only if they have metal of any kind on their person. If this is the case, the so-ut attempt to ambush the **PCs** as they enter the lair, one hiding in the shadows to the rear while the second one crouches in a niche near the ceiling. If the **PCs** have no metal items of any sort on them, they have a chance to surprise the so-ut as they’re feeding on the remnants of some wild animal. The chance for the party to ambush the so-ut is extremely good, missing out on the chance only if they’re moderately loud in their approach. Unless the battle is taken outside of the cave, the other sleeping so-ut do not awake.

So-ut (Athasian rampager) (2): hp 161 each

Once the so-ut in the cave have been slain, the **PCs** can search the area for the Scorcher and any other items of value. Unfortunately, the so-ut’s hatred of manmade items has destroyed many of the valuables that have accumulated here over the years. In addition, a so-ut with its head scorched in black flame lies in the far corner of the cavern hidden from casual view by a small group of stalagmites (**Search check DC 10**). The creature died after trying to destroy the Scorcher with its deadly fangs. The weapon

of Rajaat can be found still lodged in its blistered jaws. Other items of value found in the lair include: 403 ceramic pieces scattered about the cave (**Search DC 10** for 100 Cp, **DC 15** for 201 Cp; **DC 20** for 302 Cp; **DC 25** for 403 Cp), a *gem of seeing* (**Search DC 15**), a bone *widow’s knife +4* (**Search DC 15**), and a *potionfruit of stoneskin* (**Search DC 15**).

Aftermath

Once the Scorcher has been recovered, the **PCs** can travel to either Raam or Balic to find the other artifacts. If they plan on traveling by the Silt Sea, the **PCs** will have to convince Master Trader Hurdlll Crost to reopen trade routes.

If the **PCs** have all the three artifacts

The **PCs** can set course towards New Giustenal. As noted earlier, the **PCs** have 20 days to gather all three artifacts and reach New Giustenal. Every five days that pass from the time the **PCs** meet Arru, Dregoth completes another stage of his *godhood* spell (3rd stage on day 5, 4th stage on day 10, 5th stage on day 15 and 6th stage on day 20). After Dregoth has completed the 6th stage, he relocates to the Pristine Tower, where he will complete the *godhood* spell.

If the **PCs** have run out of time

If it becomes apparent that the **PCs** are not going to retrieve all three artifacts within this timeframe, they may have to confront Dregoth at the Pristine Tower with only one or two of the relics. If the **PCs** haven’t gathered the three artifacts and aren’t nearing New Giustenal at the end of the 20th day, they will be contacted psionically by the Shadow King and told to go immediately to the Pristine Tower before Dregoth is able to complete the *godhood* spell.

The journey to New Giustenal and the Pristine Tower are detailed in *Dregoth Ascending Part III: Confrontation*.

APPENDIX I: NPCs

Generic NPCs

Assassin
Dirty Lizard Elf Brawler
Dirty Lizard Half-giant Brawler
Dirty Lizard Human Brawler
Dray Agent
Merchant Circle Archer
Merchant Circle Defiler
Merchant Circle Muscle
Raam Mansabdar
Shadow Templar
Shom Cleric
Shom Defiler
Shom Guard
Shom Half-giant Guard
Shom Psion
Shom Trader
Templar of Abalach-Re
Village Tough Elf
Village Tough Human
Warrior of Tenpug's Band

Specific NPCs

Arru
Asaran
Asthira
Dara-Sin
Falmon Durow
Garreth Brodden
Gessnic
Grogh-En
Hukaa New Moons
Hurdll Crost
Jaksot Han
Keelorr Dark Moon
Korno
Lady Essen
Leviath the Calm
Lord Kaladon
Lord Tabaros
Mohaj
Mox
Nanda Shatri
Nnn'tkk
Roal
Shimmer
Siln

Tarinne Wavir
Tarq'uat
Tenpug
Toraus
Xion

GENERIC NPCS

Assassin: Male/Female human Rogue 5/Assassin 2; CR 7; Medium humanoid (human); HD 7d6+7; hp 34; Init +3; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15, touch 13, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +4; Grp +6; Atk +9 melee (1d4+2/x3, puchik) or +7 ranged (1d4+2 plus poison, dart); Full Atk +9 melee (1d4+2/x3, puchik) or +7 ranged (1d4+2, dart); SA death attack (DC 13), sneak attack +4d6; SQ +1 save against poison, evasion, poison use, trap sense +1, trapfinding, uncanny dodge; AL CE; SV Fort +2, Ref +10, Will +1; Str 14, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 10, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Balance +10, Bluff +3, Climb +7, Disguise +3, Escape Artist +9, Hide +15, Intimidate +3, Jump +9, Listen +10, Move Silently +15, Open Lock +6, Sleight of Hand +7, Spot +10, Tumble +15; Dodge, Stealthy, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (Puchik).

Possessions: masterwork puchik, 3 darts (coated with deathblade poison), leather armor (carru), 100 Cp (payment).

Assassin Powers Known (power points 2, save DC 11 + power level): 1st - psionic jump, psionic true strike.

Dirty Lizard Elf Brawler: Male elf Rog 5; CR 5; Medium humanoid (elf); HD 5d6+5; hp 25; Init +3; Spd 40 ft.; AC 13, touch 13, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +3; Grp +5; Atk +6 melee (1d3+2, unarmed strike) or +6 melee (1d4+2/x3, puchik); SA sneak attack +3d6; SQ elf traits, evasion, trap sense +1, trapfinding, uncanny dodge; AL CN; SV Fort +2, Ref +7, Will +0; Str 14, Dex 17, Con 12, Int 12, Wis 8, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +8, Diplomacy +12, Gather Information +8, Hide +11, Intimidate +10, Jump +12, Sense Motive +7, Spot +9, Tumble +13; Improved Unarmed Strike, Weapon Finesse.

Possessions: puchik.

Dirty Lizard Half-giant Brawler: Male half-giant Bbn 5; CR 6; Large giant; HD 2d8+6 plus 5d12+15; hp 66; Init +2; Spd 50 ft.; AC 13, touch 11, flat-footed 11; Base Atk +6; Grp +16; Atk +11 melee (1d4+6, unarmed strike); Full Atk +11/+6 melee (1d4+6, unarmed strike); SA rage 2/day; SQ fast movement, half-giant traits, illiteracy, improved uncanny dodge, trap sense +1; AL C?; SV Fort +10, Ref +3, Will +0; Str 22, Dex 14, Con 17, Int 4, Wis 8, Cha 6.

Skills and Feats: Climb +8, Intimidate +3, Jump +9; Cleave, Improved Unarmed Strike, Power Attack.

Rage (Ex): While raging, the Dirty Lizard Half-giant Brawler gains an additional 2 hp per character level and the following statistics: AC 11 touch 9, flat-footed 9; Grp +18; Atk +11 melee (1d4+6, unarmed strike); Full Atk +11/+6 melee (1d4+6, unarmed strike); SV Fort +12, Will +2; Str 26, Con 21; Climb +10, Jump + 11

Dirty Lizard Human Brawler: Male human Ftr 5; CR 5; Medium humanoid (human); HD 5d10+5; hp 37; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 12, touch 12, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +5; Grp +12; Atk +8 melee (1d3+3, unarmed strike); SA -; SQ -; AL CN; SV Fort +5, Ref +3, Will +0; Str 16, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +5, Climb +9, Intimidate +7, Jump +9; Combat Reflexes, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Grapple, Improved Overrun, Improved Unarmed Strike, Power Attack.

Dray Agent: Male dray Tem 6/Psion (telepath) 7; CR 14; Medium monstrous humanoid; HD 6d8+18 plus 7d4+21; hp 87; Init +6; Spd 30 ft.; AC 17, touch 12, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +7; Grp +8; Atk +9 melee (1d8+2/x3, +1 *carrikal*) or +9 ranged (1d4+1/19-20, dagger); Full Atk +9/+4 melee (1d8+2/x3, +1 *carrikal*) or +9/+4 ranged (1d4+1/19-20, dagger); SA -; SQ darkvision, discipline (telepathy), fire resistance 10, less water, light sensitivity, low-light vision, secular authority, rebuke undead 6/day; AL LE; SV Fort +10, Ref +6,

Will +11; Str 13, Dex 14, Con 16, Int 17, Wis 13, Cha 16.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +19, Concentration +18, Diplomacy +23, Disguise +5 (+7 to act in character), Gather Information +19, Knowledge (psionics) +12, Knowledge (religion) +12, Sense Motive +17; Empower Power, Extend Spell, Greater Psionic Weapon, Improved Initiative, Inquisitor, Martial Weapon Proficiency (*carrikal*), Martial Weapon Proficiency (longsword), Psionic Weapon, Stand Still.

Templar Spells Known: (8/6/4/3; save DC 13 + spell level): 0 – *cure minor wounds, defiler scent, detect magic, detect poison, inflict minor wounds, mending, resistance, virtue*; 1st – *bless, command, cure light wounds, divine favor, inflict light wounds, shield of faith*; 2nd – *death knell, enthrall, hold person, undetectable alignment*; 3rd – *cure serious wounds, dispel magic, sandspray*.

Psion Powers Known (power points 56, save DC 13 + power level): 1st – *conceal thoughts, deceleration*, inertial armor*, mind thrust*, psionic charm**; 2nd – *biofeedback*, ego whip*, psionic knock, read thoughts, thought shield**; 3rd – *crisis of breath*, forced share pain*, psionic blast*; 4th – *correspond, mindwipe**.

*Power can be augmented.

Possessions: +1 *carrikal*, hat of disguise, leather armor, 2 daggers (bone), amulet of the dragon (sigil).

Merchant Circle Archer: Male/Female human Fighter 7; CR 7; Medium humanoid (human); HD 7d10+7; hp 45; Init +3; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15, touch 13, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +7; Grp +9; Atk +8 melee (1d6+1/19-20, shortsword) or +11 ranged (1d8+4/x3, longbow); Full Atk +8/+3 melee (1d6+1/19-20, shortsword) or +9/+9/+4 ranged (1d8+4/x3, longbow); AL CN; SV Fort +6, Ref +5, Will +3; Str 14, Dex 16, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Handle Animal +4, Intimidate +4, Knowledge (Warcraft) +5, Listen +5, Ride +10, Spot +5, Survival +2; Alertness, Mounted Archery, Mounted Combat, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot,

Rapid Shot, Weapon Focus (Longbow), Weapon Specialization (Longbow).

Possessions: composite longbow [+2 Str bonus], bone shortsword, leather armor (carru), 30 arrows, 2d6 sp.

Merchant Circle Defiler: Female half-elf Wizard (defiler) 5/Arch Defiler 3; CR 8; Medium humanoid (elf); HD 8d4+8; hp 28; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 12, touch 12, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +3; Grp +3; Atk +2 melee (1d4-1/19-20, dagger) or +4 ranged (1d4-1/19-20, dagger); Full Atk +2 melee (1d4-1/19-20, dagger) or +4 ranged (1d4-1/19-20, dagger); SQ casting time metamagic 1/day, tainted aura, half-elf traits; AL CN; SV Fort +6, Ref +4, Will +6; Str 10, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 17, Wis 8, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +12, Disguise +10, Knowledge (arcana) +13, Knowledge (nature) +10, Spellcraft +15, Survival +8 (+10 in aboveground natural environments); Agonizing Radius, Destructive Raze, Great Fortitude, Maximize Spell, Scribe Scroll, Wastelander.

Possessions: obsidian dagger, spellbook (patterns inside of cloak), spell component satchel, 2d10 sp.

Wizard Spells Prepared (4/5/4/4/2; save DC 13 + spell level): 0 - *detect magic* (2), *mage hand*, *mending*; 1st - *cooling canopy*, *mage armor*, *magic missile* (2), *magic weapon*; 2nd - *flaming sphere*, *protection from arrows*, *scorching ray* (2); 3rd - *dedication*, *dispel magic*, *fireball*, *lightning bolt*; 4th - *confusion*, *maximized magic missile*.

Merchant Circle Muscle: Male/Female half-giant Fighter 6; CR 7; Medium giant; HD 2d8+8 plus 6d10+24; hp 74; Init -1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 14, touch 9, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +7; Grp +17; Atk +13 melee (2d6+11/x3, trikal); Full Atk +13/+8 melee (2d6+11/x3, trikal); SQ half-giant traits; AL C?; SV Fort +12, Ref +1, Will +1; Str 23, Dex 8, Con 18, Int 9, Wis 8, Cha 6.

Skills and Feats: Intimidate +5, Listen +4, Spot +4; Alertness, Cleave, Improved Sunder, Power Attack, Skill Focus (Intimidate), Weapon Focus (Trikal), Weapon Specialization (Trikal).

Possessions: trikal, hide armor (mekillot), 2d6 Cp.

Raam Mansabdar: Male and female human Warrior 1; CR ½; hp 9; AC 14, touch 10, flat-footed 14; Full Atk +3 melee (1d8+1/19-20, macahuitl); Fort +3, Ref +0, Will +0; Str 12, Dex 11, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Handle Animal +4, Intimidate +4, Ride +4; Teamwork, Weapon Focus (macahuitl).

Possessions: leather armor (carru), wood heavy shield, macahuitl, 1d6 bits, 1d6 beads.

Shadow Templar: Male & Female Human Tem 7/Shadow Templar 3; CR 9; Medium humanoid (human); HD 7d8+14 plus 3d6+6; hp 67; Init +2; Spd 20 ft.; AC 15, touch 12, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +6; Grp +9; Atk +10 melee (1d6+3/19-20, steel shortsword) or +9 melee (1d8+4/x3, longspear) or +10 melee (1d6+3/18-20 plus poison, masterwork wrist razor); Full Atk +10/+5 melee (1d6+3/19-20, steel shortsword) or +9/+4 melee (1d8+4/x3, longspear) or +10/+5 melee (1d6+3/18-20 plus poison, masterwork wrist razor) or +8/+3 melee (1d6+3/19-20, steel shortsword) and +8 melee (1d6+3/18-20 plus poison, masterwork wrist razor); SA *chill touch*; SQ secular authority, shadow casting, shadow illusion, shadow taint; AL LE; SV Fort +8, Ref +5, Will +9; Str 17, Dex 15, Con 15, Int 14, Wis 12, Cha 16.

Skills and Feats: Appraise +8, Bluff +10, Concentration +9, Diplomacy +14, Heal +8, Intimidate +12, Knowledge (religion) +14, Knowledge (the planes) +14, Sense Motive +8, Spellcraft +15; Combat Reflexes, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (wrist razor), Martial Weapon Proficiency (longsword), Martial Weapon Proficiency (shortsword), Spear Wall, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Focus (shortsword).

Shadow Templar Spells Prepared (5/4/2; save DC 12 + spell level): 0 - *arcane mark*, *detect magic*, *message*, *read magic*, *slave scent*; 1st - *burning hands*, *shield*, *summon monster I*, *true strike*; 2nd - *bull's strength*, *death mark*.

Possessions: longspear, shortsword (steel), masterwork wrist razor, three doses of desert mastyrial venom (one already

applied to wrist razor), mekillot hide armor, sigil.

Notes: The templar's wrist razors are coated in desert mastyril venom (Injury, Fortitude DC 18, initial and secondary damage 1d6 Con. The save DC is Constitution-based).

Shom Cleric of Silt: Male human Cleric (silt) 8; CR 8; Medium humanoid (human); HD 8d8+8; hp 47; Init +4; Spd 20 ft.; AC 17, touch 10, flat-footed 17; Base Atk +6; Grp +8; Atk +10 melee (2d4+3/x4, masterwork scythe); Full Atk +10/+5 melee (2d4+3/x4, masterwork scythe); SA rebuke undead 4/day; SQ -; AL LE; SV Fort +7, Ref +4, Will +8; Str 14, Dex 10, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 15, Cha 13.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +7, Heal +6, Knowledge (religion) +4, Knowledge (the planes) +4, Knowledge (undead) +7, Spellcraft +4, Spot +6; Combat Casting, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Weapon Focus (scythe).

Cleric Spells Prepared (6/6/5/4/3; DC 12 + spell level): 0- *create element, detect magic, guidance, inflict minor wounds, mending, resistance*; 1st- *death knell*, divine favor, doom, entropic shield, heat lash, inflict light wounds*; 2nd- *aid, bull's strength, cure moderate wounds, death mark*, silence*; 3rd- *animate dead*, worm's breath, searing light, surface walk*; 4th- *elemental armor, elemental weapon, vampiric touch**.

*Domain spell. *Domains:* Dead Heart (when dealing with undead, +4 to Cha-based skills and rebuke/command attempts), Soul Slayer (when striking with whip, automatically grapple as if using Improved Grab ability).

Possessions: braxat chitin half-plate, masterwork scythe, 2d10 ceramic pieces.

Shom Defiler: Male elf Wizard 9; CR 9; Medium humanoid (elf); HD 9d4; hp 24; Init +3; AC 13, touch 13, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +4; Grp +3; Atk +3 melee (1d6-1, quarterstaff); Full Atk +3 melee (1d6-1, quarterstaff); SA -; SQ elf traits; SV Fort +3, Ref +6, Will +6; AL CN; Str 8, Dex 16, Con 10, Int 16, Wis 10, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +11, Concentration +12, Decipher Script +9, Disguise +11, Knowledge (Arcana) +15, Spellcraft +11; Agonizing Radius, Controlled Raze, Destructive Raze, Distance Raze, Empower Spell, Scribe Scroll.

Spells Prepared (4/5/5/4/2/1; save DC 13 + spell level): 0 - *daze (2), detect magic, mage hand*; 1st - *mage armor, magic missile (3), true strike*; 2nd - *boneharden, fox's cunning, invisibility, mirror image, protection from arrows*; 3rd - *empowered magic missile, fireball, fly, summon monster III*; 4th - *greater invisibility, summon monster IV*; 5th - *empowered fireball*.

Possessions: quarterstaff, spell component pouch, spellbook (papyrus scrolls).

Shom Guard: Male and female human Fighter 6; CR 6; Medium humanoid (human); HD 6d10+12; hp 49; Init +5; AC 17, touch 11, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +6; Grp +8; Atk +10 melee (1d8+4/19-20, masterwork macahuitl) or +7 ranged (1d8/19-20, light crossbow); Full Atk +10/+5 melee (1d8+4/19-20, masterwork macahuitl) or +7/+2 ranged (1d8/19-20, light crossbow); SA - SQ -; SV Fort +7, Ref +3, Will +2; AL LN; Str 14, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 13, Wis 10, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Handle Animal +8, Knowledge (warcraft) +10, Profession (mercenary) +4, Ride +10; Combat Expertise, Concentrated Fire, Improved Disarm, Improved Initiative, Rapid Reload, Shield Wall, Weapon Focus (macahuitl), Weapon Specialization (macahuitl).

Possessions: masterwork macahuitl, wood heavy shield, light crossbow, quiver with 12 bolts, chitin armor, 1d4 Cp, 1d6 bits, 1d8 beads.

Shom Half-giant Guard: Male half-giant Ftr 6; CR 7; Medium giant; HD 2d8+6 plus 6d10+18; hp 69; Init 0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 19, touch 9, flat-footed 19; Base Atk +7; Grp +17; Atk +13 melee (2d8+8/x3, large gouge); Full Atk +13/+8 melee (2d8+8/x3, large gouge); SA -; SQ half-giant traits; AL L?; SV Fort +11, Ref +2, Will +1; Str 23, Dex 10, Con 17, Int 6, Wis 8, Cha 4.

Skills and Feats: Climb +1, Jump +1, Ride +6, Spot +2; Cleave, Diehard, Endurance, Power Attack, Quick Draw, Weapon Focus (gouge), Weapon Specialization (gouge).

Possessions: braxat chitin full plate, large gouge.

Shom Psion: Female dwarf Psion (nomad) 9; CR 9; Medium humanoid (dwarf); HD 9d4+18; hp 52; Init +0; Spd 20 ft.; AC 14, touch 10, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +4; Grp +6; Atk +7 melee (1d6+2/x2, masterwork shortspear); SA -; SQ discipline (psychoportation), dwarf traits; AL LN; SV Fort +5, Ref +3, Will +6; Str 14, Dex 10, Con 15, Int 15, Wis 10, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +13, Knowledge (psionics) +12, Psicraft +13, Ride +9, Survival +9; Combat Manifestation, Greater Psionic Endowment, Light Armor Proficiency, Psionic Body, Psionic Endowment, Psionic Weapon.

Psion Powers Known (power points 81, save DC 12 + power level): 1st – *burst, empathy*, far hand*, force screen*, mind thrust**; 2nd – *detect hostile intent, dimension swap*, psionic levitate, psionic tongues*; 3rd – *body adjustment*, energy burst*, mental barrier*, psionic keen edge*; 4th – *empathic feedback*, psionic dimensional anchor, psionic dismissal, psionic fly*; 5th – *baleful teleport*, psionic teleport*.

*Power can be augmented.

Possessions: chitin armor, masterwork shortspear, 2d10 ceramic pieces.

Shom Trader: Male Human Exp 4/Dune Trader 1; CR 4; Medium humanoid (human); HD 5d6+5; hp 28; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15, touch 11, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +3; Grp +2; Atk +2 melee (1d4-1/19-20, bone dagger); SA -; SQ contact 1/week, fast talk; AL LE; SV Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +7; Str 8, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 15, Wis 13, Cha 14.

Skills and Feats: Appraise +12, Bluff +12, Decipher Script +10, Diplomacy +14, Gather Information +10, Intimidate +12, Profession (merchant) +9, Ride +7, Sense Motive +7, Survival +9; Toughness, Trader, Wastelander.

Possessions: chitin armor, dagger (bone), 4d10 ceramic pieces.

Templar of Abalach-Re: Male and female human Templar 3; CR 2; Medium humanoid (human); HD 3d8+3; hp 20; Init +0; Spd 30ft.; AC 14, touch 10, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +2; Grp +4; Atk +4 melee (1d6+1/18-20, bone scimitar); Full Atk +4 melee (1d6+1/18-20, bone scimitar); SA sigil, rebuke undead 3/day; SQ secular authority, SV Fort +4, Ref +1, Will +5; AL LN; Str 14, Dex 10, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 15, Cha 11.

Skills and Feats: Appraise +6, Diplomacy +8, Intimidate +6, Sense Motive +8, Spellcraft +6; Cleave, Martial Weapon Proficiency (greatclub), Martial Weapon Proficiency (scimitar), Power Attack, Weapon Focus (scimitar).

Possessions (each): bone scimitar, wood large shield, leather armor, sigil, 1d6+1 sp and 3d4 Cp.

Village Tough Elf: Male elf Com 3; CR 2; Medium humanoid (elf); HD 3d4; hp 12; Init +5; Spd 40 ft.; AC 11, touch 11, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +1; Grp +2; Atk +2 melee (1d4+1/19-20, bone dagger); SA -; SQ elf traits; AL CN; SV Fort +1, Ref +2, Will +0; Str 13, Dex 13, Con 10, Int 9, Wis 8, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Climb +3, Jump +3, Listen +2, Spot +2; Improved Initiative, Toughness.

Possessions: dagger (bone).

Village Tough Human: Male human Com 3; CR 2; Medium humanoid (human); HD 3d4+3; hp 15; Init +4; Spd 30 ft.; AC 10, touch 10, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +1; Grp +2; Atk +2 melee (1d4+1/19-20, bone dagger); SA -; SQ -; AL CN; SV Fort +2, Ref +1, Will +0; Str 13, Dex 11, Con 12, Int 9, Wis 8, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Climb +4, Jump +4, Listen +2, Spot +2; Improved Initiative, Quick Draw, Toughness.

Possessions: dagger (bone).

Warrior of Tenpug's Band: Male Human Ftr 5; CR 5; Medium humanoid (human); HD 5d10+10; hp 42; Init +5; Spd 30 ft.; AC 13, touch 11, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +5; Grp +8; Atk +8 melee (1d8+4/19-20, bone longsword); SA -; SQ -; AL LN; SV Fort +6,

Ref +2, Will +2; Str 16, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Craft (weaponsmithing) +4, Intimidate +3, Profession (artisan) +5; Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Mobility, Weapon Focus (longsword), Weapon Specialization (longsword).

Possessions: longsword (bone), carru leather armor, 2d4 ceramic pieces.

SPECIFIC NPCs

Arru: Female human Tem 5/Wife of Nibenay 9; CR 14; Medium humanoid (human); HD 14d8+28; hp 94; Init +3; Spd 30 ft.; AC 21, touch 13, flat-footed 18; Base Atk +9; Grp +12; Atk +13 melee (1d6+4, +1 quarterstaff); Full Atk +13/+8 melee (1d6+4, +1 quarterstaff) or +11/+6 melee (1d6+4, +1 quarterstaff) and +11 melee (1d6+2, +1 quarterstaff); SA rebuke undead; SQ scholar, seductress (DC 22), secular authority, shadow king's guidance, shadow king's knowledge, war caster; AL LE; SV Fort +12, Ref +7, Will +14; Str 16, Dex 16, Con 15, Int 16, Wis 19, Cha 17.

Skills and Feats: Appraise +10, Bluff +20, Concentration +14, Diplomacy +24, Gather Information +13, Intimidate +12, Knowledge (Local) +13, Knowledge (Religion) +13, Knowledge (Warcraft) +20, Sense Motive +21, Spellcraft +20; Combat Expertise, Hidden Talent, Improved Disarm, Martial Weapon Proficiency (alak), Martial Weapon Proficiency (gouge), Spear Wall, Teamwork, Two-Weapon Fighting.

Powers Known (power points 2): 1st – know direction and location.

Templar Spells Known: (6/7/7/7/6/6/5/3; save DC 13 + spell level): 0 – cure minor wounds, defiler scent, detect magic, detect poison, inflict minor wounds, light, mending, resistance, virtue; 1st – black cairn, command, cure light wounds, divine favor, hand of the sorcerer-monarch, shield of faith; 2nd – battlefield healing, bull's strength, death knell, hold person, silence, zone of truth; 3rd – animate dead, cure serious wounds, dedication, dispel magic, protection from energy;

4th – divine power, freedom of movement, greater command, neutralize poison, tongues; 5th – elemental strike, klar's heart, mark of justice, scrying; 6th – blade barrier, forbiddance, greater dispelling; 7th – crusade, confessor's flame.

Possessions: +8 bracers of armor, +1/+1 quarterstaff (ranike), sigil.

In addition to being a high level templar of the Shadow King, Arru is a strikingly beautiful woman. However, an air of pretension can be seen in her look as well as in her treatment of others. Like most templars Arru has no patience for discourteous or uncivil behavior, but manages to keep her composure in her dealings with the party. Unless the characters actually raise a weapon to her, Arru remains the composed bureaucrat; however, insults are not easily forgotten.

Asaran: Male human Ftr 7; CR 7; Medium humanoid (human); HD 7d10+14; hp 57; Init +6; Spd 20 ft.; AC 17, touch 12, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +7; Grp +11; Atk +12 melee (1d8+5/19-20, masterwork bone longsword); Full Atk +12/+7 melee (1d8+5/19-20, masterwork bone longsword); SA -; SQ -; AL CN; SV Fort +7, Ref +4, Will +3; Str 18, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 13, Wis 12, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Climb +11, Intimidate +14, Jump +11, Spot +3; Combat Expertise, Dodge, Improved Disarm, Improved Initiative, Mobility, Rotate Lines, Weapon Focus (longsword), Weapon Specialization (longsword).

Possessions: hide armor (inix), wood heavy shield, masterwork longsword (bone).

Asaran is a veteran mercenary captain who used to work for House M'ke, but after the merchant family's indecisive response to the dray threat, Asaran and his men deserted to join Leviath the Calm's forces. Now Asaran serves as Leviath's lieutenant, responsible for organizing the defense of the innocent victims of the dray attack.

Asaran is a headstrong and tempered mercenary. His tanned face is rough from

the stinging winds of the desert, his grin misses a couple of teeth, and his chin regularly has two or three day old stubs.

Asthira: Female human Tem 6/Shadow templar 7; CR 12; Medium humanoid (human); HD 6d8+24 and 7d6+28; hp 116; Init +3; Spd 30 ft.; AC 13, touch 13, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +7; Grp +9; Atk +12 melee (1d8+6/x3, +3 *longspear*); Full Atk +12/+7 melee (1d8+6/x3, +3 *longspear*); SA *chill touch*; SQ secular authority, shadespeaker, shadow casting, shadow illusion, shadow taint; AL LE; SV Fort +13, Ref +7, Will +14; Str 14, Dex 17, Con 18, Int 17, Wis 19, Cha 16.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +19, Decipher Script +10, Diplomacy +23, Disguise +9, Gather Information +17, Hide +6, Intimidate +18, Knowledge (Arcana) +12, Knowledge (Planes) +12, Sense Motive +13, Spellcraft +12; Great Fortitude, Leadership, Martial Weapon Proficiency (longspear), Martial Weapon Proficiency (shortsword), Rotate Lines, Silent Spell, Still Spell, Spear Wall.

Shadow Templar Spells Prepared: (6/5/4/4/3/2/1/0; Save DC 13 + spell level): 0 – *detect magic, ghost sound, mage hand, mending, resistance, read magic*; 1st – *color spray, identify, magic missile, ventriloquism*; 2nd – *fog cloud, mirror image, see invisibility*; 3rd – *dispel magic, invisibility sphere, slow*; 4th – *dimensional door, fire shield, stonewall*; 5th – *silent still hold person, summon monster V*; 6th – *geas/quest*.

Possessions: robes, +3 *longspear*, spellcomponent pouch, sigil.

Asthira is the First Templar of Andropinis and leads the shadow templars in hiding. After the disappearance of Andropinis and the loss of her powers, Asthira traveled to Tyr and confronted Sadira herself to learn the truth about her master. When she discovered Andropinis had been imprisoned in the Black for a thousand years and was not dead, she returned to Balic and began research in an attempt to contact her master.

After several months of study an enigmatic shadow wizard appeared before Asthira with a message from Andropinis.

She was to learn the magic of this mysterious wizard, so the sorcerer-monarch could contact the material world from the Black through his First Templar. Eighteen months later Asthira has become a shadow wizard of impressive power, her aptitude for the mysterious energy surprising even her own teacher – who recently left Balic for places unknown.

The First Templar and a handful of other loyal subjects have devoted their lives to finding a way to free their master from the Black – no matter what the cost.

Asthira has paid a price for her newfound power. Much of her athletic body has become laced with shadow essence from the Black, giving her a strange appearance and an eerie chill that accompanies her presence.

Dara-Sin: Female human Tem 1; CR ½; Medium humanoid (human); HD 1d8; hp 8; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 12, touch 11, flat-footed 11; Base Atk +0; Grp +0; Atk +0 melee (1d6, club); SA –; SQ secular authority, AL LN; SV Fort +2, Ref +1, Will +4; Str 10, Dex 12, Con 10, Int 13, Wis 14, Cha 15.

Skills and Feats: Appraise +5, Diplomacy +8, Knowledge (Local) +5, Knowledge (Religion) +5, Sense Motive +8, Spellcraft +5; Martial Weapon Proficiency (longsword), Martial Weapon Proficiency (shortsword), Negotiator, Run.

Possessions: padded armor, club, sigil, 5 Cp and 12 bits.

Dara-Sin is a scared nineteen year old girl who was only beginning her templar indoctrination when Abalach-Re was slain. After the riots that destroyed the city she became friends with Xion and the two have a home amidst the ruins of the Palace District. They are gathering what spoils they can find in an effort to raise money and move to either Draj or Tyr. Dara-Sin is an innocent bystander who truly regrets her past notion of ever becoming a templar. All she wants is to have Xion returned to her so they can start their life over again, which is going to be impossible unless the PCs locate and restore Xion to life.

Like most Raamites, Dara-Sin has black hair and tanned skin. She dresses in brown robes to conceal her prominent feminine traits to avoid unwanted bodily attention. Dara-Sin has big brown eyes that promote her innocent appearance, but she rarely meets anyone's gaze, keeping her eyes firmly on the ground ahead of her.

Falmon Durow: Male half-elf Psion (telepath) 12/Rogue 4; CR 16; Medium humanoid (elf); HD 12d4+12 plus 4d6+6; hp 67; Init +8; Spd 30 ft.; AC 16, touch 14, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +9; Grp +11; Atk +13 melee (1d6+3/19-20, shortsword); Full Atk +13/+8 melee (1d6+3/19-20, shortsword); SA sneak attack +2d6; SQ discipline (telepathy), evasion, trap sense +1, trapfinding, uncanny dodge, half-elf traits; AL LN; SV Fort +7, Ref +12, Will +12; Str 15, Dex 19, Con 12, Int 16, Wis 15, Cha 9.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +11, Concentration +17, Diplomacy +9, Intimidate +12, Knowledge (Local) +13, Knowledge (Nobility and Royalty) +11, Knowledge (Psionics) +11, Listen +11, Psicraft +15, Sense Motive +18, Sleight of Hand +15, Spot +11; Combat Manifestation, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Drake's Child, Improved Initiative, Inquisitor, Mobility, Psionic Endowment, Sidestep Charge.

Possessions: fine robes, +2 *parrying obsidian short sword*, masterwork widow's knife (hidden on person, DC 35 to detect), +2 *amulet of natural armor*, 44 Cp.

Psion Powers Known (power points 144, save DC 13 + power level): 1st – *conceal thoughts**, *detect psionics*, *mindlink**, *missive**, *psionic charm**; 2nd – *aversion**, *brain lock**, *psionic suggestion**, *read thoughts**; 3rd – *crisis of breath**, *hostile empathic transfer**, *false sensory input**, *psionic blast**; 4th – *psionic dominate**, *psionic modify memory*, *schism*, *thieving mindlink**; 5th – *mind probe*, *psionic true seeing**, *shatter mind blank*, *tower of iron will**; 6th – *mind switch**, *psionic disintegrate**, *remote view trap*.

*Power can be augmented.

Falmon is a fanatically loyal senior agent to House Wavir. He is serious and earnest. With the impending death of Lord Tabaros,

Falmon has thrown his support behind Tarinne for the future. The half-elf's web of contacts and ruthless agents makes him a dangerous man to cross.

Garreth Brodden: Male Human Exp 4/Dune Trader 1; CR 4; Medium humanoid (human); HD 5d6+5; hp 25; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 13, touch 11, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +3; Grp +5; Atk +5 melee (1d8+2/19-20, iron longsword); SA -; SQ contact (1/week), fast talk; AL N; SV Fort +2, Ref +2, Will +8; Str 14, Dex 12, Con 13, Int 16, Wis 14, Cha 13.

Skills and Feats: Appraise +12 (+14 for ships), Bluff +10, Craft (shipwright) +10, Diplomacy +15, Forgery +10, Gather Information +9, Intimidate +11, Knowledge (architecture and engineering) +10, Profession (merchant) +10, Sense Motive +12, Use Rope +8; Hidden Talent, Negotiator, Trader.

Psionic Powers Known (power points 2, save DC 11 + power level): 1st - *force screen*.

Possessions: longsword (iron), carru leather armor.

House M'ke's interests in Cromlin are governed by Garreth Brodden, a human trader. Garreth is a fair man, but his resources are limited and his trade operations have been hurt by the attack on Raam.

Garreth Brodden has short, curly, dark hair with clear streaks of gray. He is in his early forties and his body shows the strains of having worked his way up the ladder of House M'ke's ranks. Garreth's face and hands are rough from hard labor and the stinging desert winds. His iron longsword, which Garreth carries at all times, has not seen much use, but he carries it as a symbol of his career and station.

Gessnic: Male human Exp 4; CR 3; Medium humanoid (human); HD 4d6; hp 16; Init -1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 9, touch 9, flat-footed 9; Base Atk +3; Grp +2; Atk +2 melee (1d4-1/19-20, obsidian dagger); SA -; SQ psionics; AL LN; SV Fort +1, Ref +0, Will +5; Str 8, Dex 9, Con 10, Int 12, Wis 13, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Appraise +10, Bluff +10, Diplomacy +12, Hide +6, Listen +8,

Profession (merchant) +8, Sense Motive +8, Survival +8; Hidden Talent (*know direction and location*), Run, Trader.

Psionic Powers Known (power points 2, save DC 11 + power level): 1st - *know direction and location*.

Possessions: dagger (obsidian).

Gessnic is a middle-aged human male who deals in the buying and reselling of goods that are either in high demand or are difficult to find in certain areas.

Gessnic tends to avoid combative situations whenever possible and will hide behind the PCs if a battle breaks out. His psionic talent manifests as a knack for knowing the right way in even the most obscure location, as long as he knows his destination.

Gessnic's is short and frail, but he has a strong survival instinct – staying as far away from trouble as possible.

Grogg-En, Badna Zombie: Male human Badna zombie Templar 5/Servant of Badna 8; CR 15; Medium undead (augmented humanoid); HD 13d12; hp 84; Init +8; Spd 50 ft.; AC 20, touch 12, flat-footed 18; Base Atk +9; Grp +14; Atk +14 melee (1d6+4/19-20, masterwork bone short sword) or +14 melee (3d6+5 plus disease, claw); Full Atk +14/+9 melee (1d6+4/19-20, masterwork bone short sword) and +9 melee (3d6+2 plus disease, claw) or +14 melee (3d6+5 plus disease, 2 claws); SA disease, rebuke undead 5/day (+2 on checks), sigil, starchild; SQ Badna babble +4, damage reduction 10/magic, darkvision 60 feet, fast healing 3, immune to surprise, immunities, riot control, secular authority, skitterish, slippery mind, spell resistance 19 (31 defiler spells), starfollower, subterfuge, undead traits, vulnerability to pin; AL NE; SV Fort +10, Ref +5, Will +9; Str 20, Dex 15, Con —, Int 12, Wis 4, Cha 16.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +20, Concentration +8, Diplomacy +22, Disguise +15 (+17 acting), Gather Information +10, Heal +5, Intimidate +18, Knowledge (local) +7, Knowledge (religion) +9, Search +1 (+9 tracking *Star of Badna*), Sense Motive +7, Spellcraft +7, Spot –3 (+5 tracking *Star of Badna*), Survival –3 (+5 tracking *Star of*

Badna); Combat Reflexes, Hostile Mind, Improved Initiative, Improved Natural Attack, Iron Will, Martial Weapon Proficiency (longsword), Martial Weapon Proficiency (short sword), Negotiator.

Possessions: Masterwork bone short sword, +1 studded leather armor of seeing (Jhakar & Hardwood), sigil, *Star of Badna*.

In life, Grogg-En was a senior templar of Abalach-Re who had become sympathetic to the Veiled Alliance and the plight of the sorceress-queen's daughter Nanda Shatri. When his involvement with the Alliance was revealed to the Grand Vizier by the mansabdar Roal, Abalach-Re made Grogg-En the guardian of the artifact known as the *Star of Badna*, secure in the knowledge that the templar would be claimed by its terrible curse. Grogg-En had only been in possession of the *Star* for a brief period when Abalach-Re was slain and he took refuge in the Consecrated Sepulcher of Badna as riots swept through Raam. He was subsequently entombed in the Sepulcher when it collapsed, where he remained as the artifact transformed him fully into a Badna zombie.

Grogg-En's mind has been utterly claimed by the *Star of Badna* and his only thoughts now revolve around keeping possession of the artifact. He is suspicious in the extreme of all who approach him, believing that they come to steal his prize. Although he can still think and reason, all of his intellect is bent upon ensuring that the *Star* remains in his keeping forever.

Grogg-En is gaunt in the extreme, with withered blue skin stretched over his bones. Talons as black as pitch have sprouted from his hands and his eyes have darkened to a similar hue. Embedded in the center of his chest is the gleaming gem that is the *Star of Badna*.

Hukaa New Moons: Female elf Rog 15/Dune trader 5; CR 20; Medium humanoid (elf); HD 20d6+20; hp 92; Init +9; Spd 40 ft.; AC 21, touch 15, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +14; Grp +17; Atk +19 melee (1d8+5/15-20, +2 *elven longblade*) or +19 ranged (1d6+2/x3, masterwork composite

shortbow [+2 Str bonus]); Full Atk +19/+14/+9 melee (1d8+5/15-20, +2 *elven longblade*) or +19/+14/+9 ranged (1d6+2/x3, masterwork composite shortbow [+2 Str bonus]); SA sneak attack +8d6; SQ agent, allies, contact 3/week, fast talk, improved evasion, improved uncanny dodge, integrative bargaining, slippery mind, trapfinding, trap sense +5; AL LE; SV Fort +7, Ref +15, Will +11; Str 16, Dex 20, Con 12, Int 19, Wis 14, Cha 19.

Skills and Feats: Appraise +26, Bluff +29, Diplomacy +31, Gather Information +29, Hide +28, Listen +27, Move Silently +28, Profession (merchant) +17, Search +31, Sense Motive +25, Sleight of Hand +29, Spot +27, Tumble +18; Improved Critical (*elven longblade*), Improved Initiative, Investigator, Leadership, Martial Weapon Proficiency (*elven longblade*), Quick Draw, Trader.

Possessions: +3 *studded leather armor* (carru), +2 *elven longblade*, +3 *dagger* (obsidian), masterwork composite shortbow, 20 +3 *arrows*.

Huka New Moon has been chief of the Night Runners tribe for more than 20 years, taking over the role when her father felt the weight of his great age slowing his once lightning-fast reflexes. As Hukaa herself is fast approaching middle age, she has taken a greater interest in training her children so that at least one of them will be prepared to lead the tribe when she finally decides to step down. For now, she sees that event as happening far in the future. Because she understands the mercantile arts as well as the shadow arts, Hukaa has striven to make the Night Runners operate like a successful merchant house. All operations are organized and administered in an orderly fashion, and all missions are viewed as profit-making ventures. While she allows her advisors and clan leaders the freedom to operate independently of her control, she does like to stay involved in the day-to-day operations of the tribe. To facilitate this, Hukaa requests frequent meetings and updates so that she can stay on top of her tribe's activities.

The Night Runners learned of the dray army on the move and Hukaa ordered all elves to the Tradesmen District, to defend their newly won territory. After a long fight, the dray army withdrew. The Night Runners suffered great losses, but have secured the tribe's position in Raam.

Hukaa has sun-bleached white hair that shines around her well-tanned face. Her great beauty has served her as well as her thieving and trading skills over the years, and she seems to have only gotten more beautiful with age.

Hurdll Crost: Male human Bard 10/Dune Trader 5; CR 15; Medium humanoid (human); HD 15d6+15; hp 70; Init +8; Spd 30 ft.; AC 17, touch 14, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +10; Grp +12; Atk +16 melee (1d8+5/19-20, longsword); Full Atk +16/+11 melee (1d8+5/19-20, longsword); SQ agent, allies, bardic knowledge, bardic music, chance 1/day, contact, fast talk, integrative bargaining, mental resistance, poison use, slippery mind, speed reactions, trade secrets (agile x2); AL LN; SV Fort +12, Ref +13, Will +14; Str 14, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 16, Wis 11, Cha 17.

Skills and Feats: Appraise +22, Bluff +32, Diplomacy +17, Escape Artist +12, Gather Information +25, Intimidate +7, Knowledge (Local) +21, Listen +10, Perform +21, Profession (Merchant) +18, Sense Motive +10, Sleight of Hand +27, Spot +10, Tumble +17; Dodge, Hidden Talent, Improved Initiative, Leadership, Martial Weapon Proficiency (Longsword), Trader, Weapon Focus (Longsword).

Possessions: +3 *metal longsword*, masterwork studded leather armor (inix), +3 *cloak of resistance*, potion: *divine favor* (CL 12), three daggers and three doses of deathblade poison (all hidden on person, DC 51 to detect), 1d6 gp.

Powers Known (power points 2): 1st – *force screen*.

Hurdll Crost is the master trader of House Shom in Cromlin. He is a pragmatic man, willing to overlook many misdemeanors and slights that his patron House would normally not approve of in the interest of

drawing business opportunities to the village. The one thing he will not tolerate, however, is piracy, seeing this activity as crippling to good trade in the area.

Crost appears calm and understanding, his sandy hair and easy smile belying his canny trader's insight. Of medium height, with eyes as gray as the Silt Sea, he is happy to be underestimated by those around him, certain that this all plays to his own advantage in the end.

Jaksot Han: Male Human Ftr 5; CR 5; Medium humanoid (human); HD 5d10+10; hp 42; Init +3; Spd 30 ft.; AC 11, touch 9, flat-footed 11; Base Atk +5; Grp +7; Atk +8 melee (1d8+4/19-20, macahuitl); SA -; SQ -; AL LN; SV Fort +8, Ref +2, Will +3; Str 15, Dex 8, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Climb +8, Intimidate +7, Jump +8, Use Rope +2; Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Quick Draw, Weapon Focus (macahuitl), Weapon Specialization (macahuitl).

Possessions: macahuitl, carru leather armor, eyepatch.

Jaksot Han is a former silt pirate who now runs the Dirty Lizard tavern in Cromlin. After losing his right eye in a riad, Han gave up the pirate's life and settled for the safer pastime of running the village's seedy watering hole. Jaksot drinks far too much than is good for him and looks back on his silt-faring days with a mixture of rose-tinted nostalgia and bard-bitten cynicism.

Jaksot Han is grizzled and weathered, his features lined by years of exposure to the elements. He sports an eyepatch of dyed carru leather and his once-dark hair is gray and thinning.

Keelorr Dark Moon: Female elf Ftr 4/Rog 3/Assassin 5/Shadow dancer 3; CR 15; Medium humanoid (elf); HD 4d10+8 plus 8d6+16 plus 3d8+6; hp 98; Init +8; Spd 40 ft.; AC 19, touch 14, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +11; Grp +14; Atk +16 melee (1d8+6/18-20, +1 *elven longblade*) or +16 ranged (1d8+3/x3, masterwork composite longbow [+3 Str bonus]); Full Atk +16/+11/+6 melee (1d8+6/18-20, +1 *elven longblade*) or

+16/+11/+6 ranged (1d8+3/x3, masterwork composite longbow [+3 Str bonus]); SA death attack, sneak attack +5d6; SQ darkvision, evasion, hide in plain sight, improved uncanny dodge, poison use, save bonus against poison +2, *shadow illusion*, summon shadow, trapfinding, trap sense +1; AL LE; SV Fort +9, Ref +15, Will +4; Str 17, Dex 19, Con 14, Int 14, Wis 11, Cha 18.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +9, Climb +9, Disguise +13, Gather Information +9, Hide +16, Intimidate +12, Jump +11, Listen +7, Move Silently +16, Perform (dance) +16, Search +11, Sleight of Hand +12, Spot +7, Tumble +14; Combat Expertise, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Mobility, Improved Initiative, Spring Attack, Weapon Focus (elven longblade), Weapon Specialization (elven longblade), Whirlwind Attack.

Assassin Spells Known (4/3/0; save DC 12 + spell level): 1st – *disguise self*, *feather fall*, *sleep*, *true strike*; 2nd – *fox's cunning*, *invisibility*, *spider climb*.

Possessions: +1 *chitin armor*, +1 *elven longblade*, masterwork composite longbow, 20 masterwork arrows.

Keelorr Dark Moon is an accomplished assassin who uses stealth and misdirection to complete her missions much as others use poisons and ranged weapons. She almost always takes on an assumed role, pretending to be a beggar or dancing girl, a serving wench or a common trader, in order to get close to her target and beneath his or her guard. Her favorite role is that of an elf dancer.

Keelorr's dancing skills are so great that she often headlines at the Tent of the Dancing Swords in the Sky Singer's market. She lavishes attention on those she has been hired to murder, flirting mercilessly and dancing only for them. It is her practice to give her victims one last moment of joy before she strikes, making them happy with her dancing, her smile, or the welcoming attention of her large gray eyes. If she can make her victims love her, even for an instant, then she experiences her own sense of joy. Then, once this ritual she loves to perform has been completed, she carries out

her mission. Her kills are quick, painless, and accomplished with hardly any struggle.

Keelorr has been mentioned as the successor to the current master runner of the Dark Moon clan, but it is doubtful that she would accept the position. She enjoys her field work much too well to accept a leadership role. However, during this time of crisis, Keelorr has been selected as second in command to lead the Night Runners in the fight against the dray invaders – a role she manages quite well.

Korno: Male mul Bbn 1/Gld 4/Arena champion 4; CR 10; Medium humanoid (mul); HD 9d12+39; hp 103; Init +3; Spd 40 ft.; AC 17, touch 13, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +9; Grp +14; Atk +16 melee (1d8+8/19-20, +1 *lotulis*); Full Atk +16/+11 melee (1d8+8/19-20, +1 *lotulis*); or +14/+9 melee (1d8+8/19-20, +1 *lotulis*) and +14 melee (1d8+5/19-20, +1 *lotulis*); SA rage 1/day; SQ arena guile +2, crowd support +1, fast movement, mercy, reputation, signature move (+1 dodge bonus to AC when fighting defensively or using total defense), uncanny dodge, weapon mastery (*lotulis*); AL CN; SV Fort +14, Ref +5, Will +3; Str 21, Dex 16, Con 19, Int 14, Wis 13, Cha 15.

Skills and Feats: Balance +15, Climb +17, Intimidate +19, Jump +17, Sense Motive +13, Perform +14; Exotic Weapon Proficiency (*lotulis*), Improved Feint, Improved Unarmed Strike, Leadership, Toughness, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Focus (*lotulis*).

Rage (Ex): While raging, Korno gains an additional 2 hp per character level and the following statistics: AC 15, touch 11, flat-footed 12; Grp +16; Atk +18 melee (1d8+10/19-20, +1 *lotulis*); Full Atk +18/+13 melee (1d8+10/19-20, +1 *lotulis*); or +16/+11 melee (1d8+10/19-20, +1 *lotulis*) and +16 melee (1d8+6/19-20, +1 *lotulis*); SV Fort +16, Will +6; Str 25, Con 23; Climb +19, Jump +19.

Possessions: +2 leather armor (carru), +1 *lotulis* (metal), widow's knife (bone).

Korno, a former champion in Raam's arena, ran a loosely knit slave community for those who had nowhere to go following the death

of Abalach-Re. Though he spoke of freedom from hardship and oppression, Korno is no better than the slave taskmasters of the past. The slaves that have come to the ex-gladiator in search of a better life have continued to be treated as slaves, working with no wage to pamper Korno and his best warriors. On the other hand, despite his group's modest size Korno has some of the best warriors in the city. Many ex-slaves feel that it is better to live under the persecution and protection of Korno than to die at the hands of other factions of the city.

As the forces of Dregoth began their approach on the city Korno's band was caught totally unaware, and the former arena champion didn't even have a sword in his hand when the first attack came. As the enemy demolished the southern gate and swarmed into the city, Korno was gathering his wits when a large group of dray literally came knocking at their door. It was all the gladiator could do to fall back towards the Noble District with a small handful of his best warriors. The rest of his band was either killed or brought before Dregoth, their fate then being sealed.

Korno has become mentally unstable after his defeat at the hands of the dray and from having everything he has attained taken from him. The mul's leadership has become more chaotic, and Korno's furious rage known from the arena has manifested in uncontrolled actions.

Lady Essen: Female human Rog 7/Dune Trader 5/Psion (telepath) 4; CR 16; Medium humanoid (human); HD 12d6 plus 4d4; hp 64; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 11, touch 11, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +10; Grp +10; Atk +11 melee (1d4/19-20, masterwork dagger); Full Atk +11/+6 melee (1d4/19-20, masterwork dagger); SA sneak attack +4d6; SQ agent, allies, contact 3/week, discipline (telepathy), evasion, fast talk, integrative bargaining (sense motive), trap sense +2, trapfinding, uncanny dodge; AL LN; SV Fort +4, Ref +8, Will +12; Str 10, Dex 12, Con 10, Int 14, Wis 14, Cha 16.

Skills and Feats: Appraise +19, Bluff +22, Concentration +12, Decipher Script +17, Diplomacy +26, Forgery +17, Gather

Information +20, Intimidate +17, Knowledge (local) +7, Knowledge (nobility and royalty) +7, Knowledge (psionics) +6, Literacy (5), Profession (merchant) +17, Psicraft +6, Ride +11, Sense Motive +19, Speak Language (2), Spot +12; Inquisitor, Negotiator, Persuasive, Overchannel, Psionic Body, Psionic Meditation, Talented, Trader. *Languages:* Balican, Common, Elven, Rees.

Psion Powers Known (power points 21, save DC 12 + power level): 1st – *conceal thoughts, disable*, mind thrust*, mindlink*, psionic charm**; 2nd – *aversion*, brain lock*, psionic suggestion*, read thoughts.*

*Power can be augmented.

Possessions: masterwork dagger, cognizance crystal (9 power points), psionatrix of telepathy, ring of spell turning.

Lady Essen is the matriarch of House Rees in the city of Balic. Since her house rose to prominence following the fall of Dictator Andropinis, she has found ample opportunity to exercise her natural inclination towards boundless greed. If Essen Rees had her way, Balic would become little more than a glorified merchant village, all trade there serving to fill House Rees' coffers and propel it to the position of premier trading house of the Tablelands.

Essen is graceful and controlled, having learned discipline through years of study at the Cerebran in her youth. Her every movement is poised and calculated, serving to subtly reinforce her appearance as a woman of noble erudition. She prefers to allow her minions and underlings to carry out the daily business of meeting with House Rees' clients and peers, while she busies herself with larger issues of strategy and commerce.

Lady Essen is tall and slender, her physique groomed to reflect her aspirations of grandeur. Now in her fiftieth year, she keeps her hair a lustrous red by the daily application of dyes and oils, and has her skin scraped and groomed by her servants in order to maintain its soft sheen of health and opulence.

Leviath the Calm: Male half-giant Psion (shaper) 9; CR 10; Large Giant; HD 2d8+6

plus 9d4+27; hp 68; Init -1; Spd 40 ft.; AC 10, touch 8, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +5; Grp +14; Atk +10 melee (1d4+6, unarmed); SA -; SQ discipline (metacreativity), half-giant traits; AL LN; SV Fort +9, Ref +2, Will +7; Str 22, Dex 8, Con 16, Int 15, Wis 8, Cha 13.

Skills and Feats: Climb +11,

Concentration +13, Diplomacy +9, Jump +11, Knowledge (psionics) +11, Listen +4, Psicraft +8, Sense Motive +4, Spot +2; Expanded Knowledge, Iron Will, Mind over Body, Negotiator, Open Minded, Stand Still.

Psion Powers Known (power points 81, save DC 12 + power level): 1st – *detect psionics, inertial armor*, matter agitation, missile*, psionic minor creation*; 2nd – *biofeedback*, detect hostile intent, energy stun*, psionic tongues, thought shield**; 3rd – *body purification*, dispel psionics*, ectoplasmic cocoon*, psionic blast**; 4th – *aura sight*, detect remote viewing, psionic fabricate, quintessence*; 5th – *adapt body, tower of iron will**.

*Power can be augmented.

Possessions: Breechcloth.

Born in the slave pens of Draj forty years ago, Leviath the Calm was sold to a noble house at an early age by a greedy templar later slain for selling the sorcerer-monarch's slaves without authorization. Since the templar kept no records of his transactions the young half-giant was never returned to the pens, and the noble that purchased him never came forward for fear of his life. In fact, the noble hid Leviath from the prying eyes of others for several years, living in fear that other templars would arrest him if they discovered he owned "stolen property." It was during his seclusion Leviath learned of the Way.

An aged dwarf by the name of Barguss was also in the service of the noble house. Like most nobles it was considered fashionable to have servants such as psionics as either slaves or hirelings, and this was the case with Barguss. After a short time Leviath became friends with the dwarf, and the noble lord hit upon the idea that the half-giant could become his next servant of the Way.

Shortly after Leviath began his training, the templars of King Tectuktitlay came to

the noble's house—but not in search of Leviath. It seems the half-giant was not the only piece of “illegal” property owned by the noble, and he and his family were sentenced to the arena for crimes known only to (or fabricated by) the templars. Fortunately, neither Barguss nor Leviath were at the estate when the templars came, as the dwarf was a freeman and took Leviath's daily lesson into the wastes outside the city walls. When Barguss learned of the noble's arrest he used the Way to sneak back into the sealed estate to obtain his belongings, and left Draj never to return.

For many years Leviath and Barguss traveled the lands of Athas, all the while the old dwarf teaching everything he knew—and believed in—to his student. After a time Barguss felt it was time to teach Leviath about peace and serenity outside the Tablelands, so he took his pupil to the safest place he knew on all of Athas—New Kurn. It was there Leviath learned the teachings of Oronis of Kurn, the great scholar and avangion whose secret city the half-giant believed was the closest thing to paradise he had ever seen. Soon after arriving in New Kurn Barguss passed on. Before he died he told Leviath to make sure he passed on his knowledge to the rest of the world, else all he learned would disappear upon his death.

Leviath studied in New Kurn for many years to become a skilled psionicist, but this was not the half-giant's forte. The teachings of Barguss, and later Oronis, had taught Leviath a compassion and tranquillity that is difficult to learn on Athas. After spending over two decades in New Kurn, Leviath exiled himself from that paradise in order to fulfill Barguss' last wish—to teach Athas that there is a better peace in everyone's world. Only days after Abalach-Re was pronounced dead somewhere on the Ivory Plain, and the riots of Raam had begun, Leviath arrived in the city-state of the dead sorcerer-queen to spread his soothing words of harmony and tranquillity. Since that day two years ago many Raamites have flocked to the half-giant's banner, believing in the strength of his words.

Lord Kaladon: Male human Rogue 8/Dune Trader 5; CR 13; Medium humanoid (human); HD 13d6+26; hp 78; Init +9; Spd 30 ft.; AC 17, touch 15, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +9; Grp +10; Atk +16 melee (1d4+3/19-20, +2 *obsidian dagger of venom*) or +16 ranged (1d4+3/19-20, +2 *obsidian dagger of venom*); Full Atk +16/+11 melee (1d4+3/19-20, +2 *obsidian dagger of venom*) or +16 ranged (1d4+3/19-20, +2 *obsidian dagger of venom*); SA sneak attack +4d6; SQ allies, agent, contact 3/week, evasion, fast talk, improved uncanny dodge, integrative bargaining (bluff), trap sense +2, trapfinding; AL LE; SV Fort +5, Ref +12, Will +7; Str 12, Dex 20, Con 14, Int 13, Wis 12, Cha 17.

Skills and Feats: Appraise +19, Bluff +23, Diplomacy +21, Knowledge (Local) +17, Listen +17, Profession (Merchant) +17, Sense Motive +17, Sleight of Hand +18, Speak Language (4), Spot +17, Tumble +17; Hidden Talent, Improved Initiative, Leadership, Quick Draw, Trader, Weapon Finesse.

Languages: Balikite, Belgoi*, Common, Dwarven, Gith*, Gulg*, Nibensese*

Powers Known (power points 2): 1st – empty mind.

Possessions: +2 *obsidian dagger of venom* (hidden on person, DC 40 to detect), leather armor (inix), *skin of the defender* (inactive unless attacked).

The leader of House Tomblador is Lord Kaladon, a ruthless merchant who wants nothing more than to become dictator of Balic much in the same way Tithian ruled Tyr. Kaladon despises House Wavir for their actions, and House Rees for refusing his offer of alliance to join forces against Tabaros. Only at the insistence of his councilors did he agree to the triune council that oversees the defense of the city, but seldom does Kaladon agree with Lord Tabaros and Lady Essen. Overall, Kaladon is an extremely dangerous man, one the PCs should be wary of dealing with.

Lord Tabaros: Male human Ari 7/Rog 8/Dune Trader 5; CR 19; Medium humanoid (human); HD 7d8-14 plus 13d6-26; hp 50; Init +0; Spd 20 ft.; AC 18, touch 10,

flat-footed 18; Base Atk +14; Grp +13; Atk +14 melee (1d4-1/19-20, masterwork bronze dagger); Full Atk +14/+9/+4 melee (1d4-1/19-20, masterwork bronze dagger); SA sneak attack +4d6; SQ agent, allies, contact 3/week, evasion, fast talk, improved uncanny dodge, integrative bargaining (diplomacy), trap sense +2, trapfinding; AL NG; SV Fort +4, Ref +9, Will +16; Str 9, Dex 11, Con 6, Int 18, Wis 17, Cha 15.

Skills and Feats: Appraise +19, Bluff +25, Concentration +11, Decipher Script +12, Diplomacy +31, Forgery +16, Gather Information +15, Handle Animal +7, Intimidate +13, Knowledge (geography) +19, Knowledge (history) +10, Knowledge (local) +13, Knowledge (nobility and royalty) +21, Knowledge (psionics) +15, Literacy (10*), Profession (trader) +21, Ride +8, Search +10, Sense Motive +22, Speak Language (9), Spot +14, Survival +8 (+10 to keep from getting lost or to avoid natural hazards); Hidden Talent, Inquisitor, Iron Will, Negotiator, Persuasive, Psionic Body, Psionic Talent, Trader.

Languages: Aarakocran, Balican, Common*, Draji*, Dwarven*, Elven*, Gulg, Halfling, Nibenese*, Pterran, Raamish*, Thri-Kreen, Tyrian*, Urikite*, Wavir*.

Psionic Powers Known (power points 2, save DC 12 + power level): 1st - *conceal thoughts*.

Possessions: masterwork full plate (bronze), masterwork dagger (bronze), *periapt of proof against poison*, *ring of regeneration*, *ring of greater energy resistance (fire)*.

The aged patriarch of Balic's House Wavir, Lord Tabaros is over 100 years old and looks it. He still clings to the reins of power of his house, despite attempts by his underlings and younger relatives to undermine his authority and usurp his rule by decrees. In years past, Tabaros fancied himself as something of a dashing blade, and still styles his attitude and appearance after this lost dream of youth. When in public he endeavors to appear sharp and cunning, often going about clad in archaic plate armor fashioned from carved bronze, an ornate dagger at his belt. When in the

confined safety of the Wavir estates, however, he is often seen doddering about the halls wrapped in a shawl, shivering at draughts and muttering to himself in a wavering voice.

Beset by age and ill health, Tabaros is the epitome of the man who refuses to die, despite the fact that the Gray has been calling to him for many a year. His skin seems almost translucent, hanging from stick-like limbs and his eyes glare cadaverously from his skull of a head. He is quite bald, liver spots dotting his scalp, and speaks with a wheezing gasp. Life has not been kind to Tabaros, but he fears that death will be even less gentle.

Mohaj: Male human Ftr 7; CR 7; Medium humanoid (human); HD 7d10+21; hp 64; Init +5; Spd 20 ft.; AC 18, touch 11, flat-footed 17; Base Atk +7; Grp +9; Atk +10 melee (1d8+2/19-20, masterwork macahuitl) or +8 ranged (1d8/x3, longbow); Full Atk +10/+5 melee (1d8+2/19-20, masterwork macahuitl) or +8/+3 ranged (1d8/x3, longbow); SA -; SQ -; AL CN; SV Fort +9, Ref +4, Will +7; Str 14, Dex 13, Con 16, Int 12, Wis 14, Cha 15.

Skills and Feats: Handle Animal +12, Intimidate +12, Knowledge (Warcraft) +11, Ride +11; Concentrated Fire, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Protective, Quick Draw, Shield Wall, Teamwork.

Possessions: +1 *cloak of resistance*, breastplate (ankheg), heavy wood shield, masterwork macahuitl, longbow.

Mohaj is a House M'ke agent charged with preventing outsiders from gaining access to the M'ke trade emporium during the dray invasion. After the invasion, the emporium is open to those who come to trade.

Mohaj is mostly loyal and follows his orders, but his loyalty is first and foremost to himself. He is unlikely to pursue any action that can cause him grief from his employers, and to those who don't know him he can sometimes be perceived as hostile.

Mox: Male half-giant Psychic Warrior 17; CR 18; Large giant; HD 19d8+76; hp 185; Init +0; Spd 40 ft.; AC 20, touch 11, flat-footed

20; Base Atk +13; Grp +23; Atk +21 melee (3d8+12/19-20, swatter); Full Atk +21/+16/+11 melee (3d8+12/19-20, swatter); SQ half-giant traits; AL L?; SV Fort +17, Ref +7, Will +11; Str 23, Dex 11, Con 19, Int 13, Wis 18, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +12, Climb +8, Concentration +16, Intimidate +12, Jump +12, Listen +9, Knowledge (Psionics) +13, Spot +9; Blind-Fight, Cleave, Craft Psionic Arms and Armor, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (Swatter), Greater Psionic Weapon, Improved Critical (Swatter), Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Overchannel, Persuasive, Power Attack, Psionic Weapon, Quicken Power, Talented.

Possessions: +3 *mindcrusher swatter*, +4 *mindarmor studded leather armor (carru)*, +2 *ring of protection*, *dorje of read thoughts* (32 charges left), agate necklace (worth 10 sp).

Psionic Warrior Powers Known (power points 125, save DC 14 + power level): 1st – *call weaponry**, *conceal thoughts*, *force screen**; 2nd – *body adjustment**, *detect hostile intent*, *hustle*; 3rd – *escape detection*, *exhalation of the dragon**, *greater concealing amorphia*; 4th – *inertial barrier*, *psionic dimension door*, *steadfast perception*; 5th – *adapt body*, *oak body**, *catapsi**; 6th – *breath of the dragon**, *personal mind blank*.

*Power can be augmented.

The owner of the Lazy Mekillot could be considered a trader who uses psionics instead of bartering to do his business. The dull-witted half-giant Mox has many “friends” among those who treat him kindly instead of as another stupid brute, mostly regular patrons of the tavern. Should someone befriend him in an honest manner, Mox makes the deed does not go unnoticed. There are times when he hates deceiving his “friends” in this manner.

The psionicist and businessman Mox is a clever, manipulative entrepreneur who deals in information, subterfuge, and eradication. He does have a sense of “honor” that would keep him from stealing a homeless man’s last ceramic, but is not above probing someone’s mind for the benefit of a competitor. Mox can be an

adequate friend, a resourceful tradesman, or a ruthless killer.

Nanda Shatri: Female human Wiz 7/Psion (telepath) 4/Veiled One 10; CR 21; Medium humanoid (human); HD 21d4+63; hp 117; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 14, touch 12, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +10; Grp +12; Atk +12 melee (1d4+2/19-20, dagger); Full Atk +12/+7 melee (1d4+2/19-20, dagger); SA -; SQ alliance secrets (glyph resistant, spell bane, study), discipline, spell archive, subdual magic, twin casting; AL LG; SV Fort +9, Ref +8, Will +19; Str 14, Dex 15, Con 17, Int 19, Wis 18, Cha 18.

Skills and Feats: Bluff 20, Concentration +23, Decipher Script +20, Diplomacy +19, Disguise +20 (+22 to act in character), Gather Information +12, Knowledge (arcana) +34, Knowledge (history) +10, Knowledge (local [Raam]) +12, Knowledge (nobility and royalty) +9, Knowledge (psionics) +12, Profession (herbalist) +8, Sense Motive +10, Spellcraft +26; Brew Potion, Craft Wand, Craft Wondrous Item, Extend Spell, Heighten Spell, Leadership, Negotiator, Psionic Meditation, Scribe Scroll, Silent Spell, Skill Focus (Knowledge [arcana]), Spell Penetration, Still Spell, Widen Spell.

Wizard Spells Prepared:

(4/5/5/5/5/4/4/3/2/1; save DC 14 + spell level): 0 – *detect magic*, *ghost sound*, *open/close*, *read magic*; 1st – *charm person*, *mage armor*, *magic missile*, *shield*, *sleep*; 2nd – *fog cloud*, *mirror image*, *misdirection*, *rope trick*, *spider climb*; 3rd – *dispel magic*, *nondetection*, *stinking cloud*, *slow*, *tongues*; 4th – *confusion*, *fire shield*, *silent still invisibility*, *shout*, *wall of fire*; 5th – *dominate person*, *hold monster*, *passwall*, *telekinesis*; 6th – *globe of invulnerability*, *greater dispel magic*, *greater heroism*, *true seeing*; 7th – *heightened confusion*, *mass hold person*, *spell turning*; 8th – *mass charm monster*, *power word stun*; 9th – *wail of the banshee*.

Psion Powers Known (power points 25, save DC 14 + power level): 1st – *attraction**, *detect psionics*, *know direction and location*, *mindlink**, *sense link**; 2nd – *aversion**, *detect hostile intent*, *id insinuation**, *thought shield**.

*Power can be augmented.

Possessions: +2 bracers of armor, wand of lightning bolt (31 charges, CL 10), ring of mind shielding, metal dagger, spellbook (glass bead strings).

The 177th child of the sorcerer-queen Abalach-Re, Nanda Shatri was outcast from her mother's palace at an early age. She was later adopted by palace servants and grew to be a resourceful and determined woman. Through many endeavors Nanda earned a fair amount of money which she invested in the finest teacher of magic she could find. Following the death of her adopted parents, Nanda returned to Raam to confront her true mother. During the meeting Nanda requested authority of Raam's crematory from the sorcerer-queen – who quickly agreed – happy to entrust the unpleasant job to someone of competence. Within weeks after Nanda taking control, the crematory became the headquarters of Raam's faction of the Veiled Alliance.

For two decades Nanda had lead the Alliance faction of Raam, and in that time progressed as far as possible in her magical studies. At about that time she learned of the existence, and death, of the avangion named Korgunard from an Alliance contact in Urik. Investigating further, she discovered that only a psionically tuned mind can contain the power needed to bring about a creature of such power. So at the age of 53 Nanda joined a class of noble children at Raam's Academy for the Way, and has progressed far in the past eight years.

While studying psionics during the day, Nanda has researched the avangion transformation at night – but has become aggravated at her lack of progress. It seems that the being Korgunard had obtained the spell from some unknown location, a spell Nanda has failed to duplicate given the information she obtained from the Alliance of Urik. Coupled with her slow progress in The Way, she wonders if such a feat can ever again be duplicated.

Nanda is a small, heavy-set woman in her late fifties. Since the death of her mother two years ago Nanda has dropped her title of outcast, and dresses in whatever style is currently fashionable. Her hair is gray and

waist length, her eyes green, and her voice is almost as deep as a man. Nanda loves to talk for hours on dozens of subjects, but is extremely interested in the topics of preserving magic and psionics.

Nnn'tkk: Male thri-kreen Ranger 6/Fighter 4/Master Scout 5; CR 16; Medium monstrous humanoid; HD 13d8+26 plus 4d10+8; hp 128; Init +5; Spd 45 ft.; AC 23, touch 15, flat-footed 18; Base Atk +17; Grp +19; Atk +23 melee (1d10+7/19-20, gythka) or +23 ranged (1d6+3, chatkcha); Full Atk +21/+16/+11/+6 melee (1d10+7/19-20, gythka) and +21/+16/+11 melee (1d10+6/19-20, gythka) and +14 melee (1d4+1 plus poison, bite); SQ blaze trail, favored terrain (stony barrens +4, sandy wastes +4, salt flats +2), hard march, master tracker, stealth run, wild empathy +3, thri-kreen traits; AL TN; SV Fort +16, Ref +18, Will +13; Str 14, Dex 21, Con 15, Int 14, Wis 18, Cha 6.

Skills and Feats: Balance +10, Handle Animal +4, Hide +25, Jump +36, Knowledge (Geography) +7, Knowledge (Nature) +12, Listen +19, Move Silently +25, Search +7, Spot +19, Survival +26 (+28 in aboveground natural environments, +28 to keep from getting lost or to avoid natural hazards, +28 to find or follow tracks); Active Glands, Deflect Arrows, Endurance, Greater Two-Weapon Fighting, Improved Critical (Gythka), Improved Natural Armor, Improved Two-Weapon Fighting, Iron Will, Mental Resistance, Rapid Metabolism, Track, Two-Weapon Fighting, Wastelander, Weapon Focus (Gythka), Weapon Specialization (Gythka).

Ranger Spells Prepared (2; save DC 14 + spell level): 1st – endure elements, speak with animals.

Possessions: +3 gythka, +1 chatkcha (dasl), +2 aporter heavy shield (agafari).

Tabaros' bodyguard, Nnn'tkk's official designation within House Wavir is "Master of Hunters". Before Tabaros became so frail that he needed a personal watchman, this kreen warrior served as the trading house's premier scout, earning a reputation as one of the best scouts in the entire Tablelands.

He now spends little of his time on the open road, instead watching over the failing lord of his house.

Nnn'tkk considers House Wavir to be his own pack, having pledged his loyalty to them years before. He unquestioningly follows the orders of his superiors and is beginning to think that his aged patriarch may well outlive him. For Nnn'tkk, a life and death in service to a mighty pack such as House Wavir would be filled with honor, allowing him to meet his ancestors in the Great Circle with head held high.

Roal: Male human Templar 5/Psion (telepath) 5; CR 9; Medium humanoid (human); HD 5d8+10 plus 5d4+10; hp 60; Init +0; Spd 20 ft.; AC 17, touch 12, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +5; Grp +7; Atk +9 melee (1d8+4/19-20, longsword); Full Atk +9 melee (1d8+4/19-20, longsword); SA -; SQ discipline (telepathy), secular authority; AL CE; SV Fort +8, Ref +2, Will +8; Str 15, Dex 10, Con 14, Int 17, Wis 10, Cha 16.

Skills and Feats: Appraise +11, Bluff +15, Concentration +15, Diplomacy +15, Forgery +11, Gather Information +12, Intimidate +20, Knowledge (Psionics) +13, Knowledge (Religion) +7, Psicraft +13, Spellcraft +7; Leadership, Mansabdar, Martial Weapon Proficiency (Carrikal), Martial Weapon Proficiency (Longsword), Persuasive, Psicrystal Affinity, Psicrystal Containment, Psionic Weapon, Weapon Focus (Longsword).

Psion Powers Known (power points 32, save DC 13 + power level): 1st – conceal thoughts, demoralize, detect psionics, force screen*, psionic charm*; 2nd – aversion*, psionic identify, psionic knock, read thoughts; 3rd – hostile empathic transfer*, psionic blast*.*

*Power can be augmented.

Possessions: +1 metal longsword of power storing (hostile empathic transfer stored), masterwork breastplate (braxat), psicrystal (bully) [psionically focused], +2 ring of protection (jade), hypnotic brew (x3), sigil, 1d6 gp.

The ex-templar Roal is the epitome of immorality, corruption, and vice that made servants of Abalach-Re hated beyond belief.

In the case of Roal he was the commander of the sorcerer-queen's enforcers called the *mansabdars*, a corrupt group of soldiers and templars that used to profit from confiscating the goods and property of innocent as well as guilty citizens who didn't have the coin to pay them off. When Abalach-Re perished Roal seized control of the majority of the *mansabdars*, turning them into thugs and mercenaries who terrorized much the same way they did in the past. Being without spells also bothered him, so he turned to the study of psionics over the past two years as a way to supplement his power. With the forming of the Merchant Circle, the Nobles and House M'ke have turned to Roal's force to supplement the loss of their own troops following the invasion.

Shimmer: Female elf Com 3; CR 2; Medium humanoid (elf); HD 3d4; hp 9; Init +1; Spd 40 ft.; AC 11, touch 11, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +1; Grp +0; Atk +0 melee (1d4-1/19-20, bone dagger); SA -; SQ elf traits; AL CG; SV Fort +1, Ref +2, Will +3; Str 8, Dex 12, Con 10, Int 14, Wis 15, Cha 13.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +3, Craft (weaving) +8, Handle Animal +3, Profession (weaver) +6, Sense Motive +5; Hidden Talent, Inquisitor.

Psionic Powers Known (power points 2, save DC 11 + power level): 1st - empathy

Possessions: bone dagger, bone sewing needles and yarn, 2d8 ceramic bits.

Shimmer is an aged elven seamstress and member of Tenpug's band. In her youth, she was nanny to Jaksot Han and worked for House Shom in Cromlin. She had the singular experience of watching the ex-gladiator Vorr fall to a nightmare beast while he still wielded the Scorcher and her lurid descriptions of the battle lost her the faith of her employers and her position as a Shom employee.

She later found sanctuary, however, with Tenpug and his motley assortment of former artisans, warriors and escaped slaves. Since then, she has lived out her days with Tenpug's Band, practising her trade as weaver and seamstress and earning the affectionate nickname of "Old Mother".

Still possessed of a keen mind and deep insights, Shimmer is suspicious of strangers yet warm and nurturing to those to whom she takes a liking. Her skin is wrinkled like ancient parchment and her hands have been twisted by age until they resemble gnarled agafari roots. Only her beady black eyes, peering from beneath sunken brows hint that the woman's mind is still sprightly, even though her body is bent and bowed.

Siln: Male human Com 3; CR 2; Medium humanoid (human); HD 3d4; hp 14; Init -1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 9, touch 9, flat-footed 9; Base Atk +1; Grp +0; Atk +0 melee (1d4-1/19-20, obsidian dagger); SA -; SQ -; AL LN; SV Fort +1, Ref +0, Will +4; Str 8, Dex 9, Con 10, Int 11, Wis 12, Cha 13.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +4, Listen+6, Profession (merchant) +3, Sense Motive +3, Spot +4; Alertness, Iron Will, Toughness.

Possessions: dagger (obsidian).

Siln is a minor overseer at the Shom trading lodge in Cromlin. He is an opportunistic weasel, interested only in lining his own pockets, and seeks to extort bribes and perks from whomever is unfortunate enough to cross his path.

Siln is short, standing a hand's breadth under five feet in height, and chews on kola nuts throughout the day. Not only does this habit give his breath a bitter tang that he cannot efface, but it has stained his lips and teeth a dirty brown color.

Tarq'uat: Male belgoi Wilder 6; CR 9; Medium monstrous humanoid (Psionic); HD 5d8+10 plus 6d6+12; hp 69; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 12, touch 12, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +9; Grp +10; Atk +10 melee (1d4+1 plus 1d6 Strength damage, claw); Full Atk +10 melee (1d4+1 plus 1d6 Strength damage, 2 claws); SA Bell ringing, psi-like abilities, Strength damage; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., elude touch, psychic enervation, surging euphoria, volatile mind (1 power point), wild surge +2; AL LE; SV Fort +7, Ref +8, Will +9; Str 13, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 20.

Skills and Feats: Autohypnosis +9, Bluff +10, Concentration +10, Diplomacy +9, Hide

+9, Intimidate +7, Listen +9, Move Silently +9, Psicraft +6, Sense Motive +5, Spot +9; Ability Focus (psionic dominate), Alertness, Great Fortitude, Stealthy.

Psi-Like Abilities: 3/day – attraction (+7 bonus, DC 19*), brain lock (all targets, DC 17*), ego whip (2d4 Charisma damage, DC 19*), empty mind (+5 bonus*), psionic dominate (DC 21). Manifest level 7th. The save DCs are Charisma-based.

*Includes augmentation for the belgoi's manifest level.

Wilder Powers Known (power points 50, save DC 15 + power level): 1st – control light, inertial armor*; 2nd – id insinuation*; 3rd – time hopf.

*Power can be augmented.

Possessions: bell, bone charms

Tarq'uat is the leader of the Chwor belgoi tribe. When Dregoth's army passed through the area in which the tribe resides, the belgoi were forced to flee after having lost nearly half their numbers to dray scouts. Since then the Chwor have been feeding off fleeing Raamites traveling south.

Tar'quat has potent psionic powers which have made him the leader among his peers. The belgoi leader wears amulets and other trinkets made from humanoid bones. He is also tall, contributing to his savage appearance.

Tarinne Wavir: Female human Fighter 4/Rogue 2/Dune Trader 4; CR 10; Medium humanoid (human); HD 4d10+12 plus 6d6+18; hp 85; Init +3; Spd 20 ft.; AC 18, touch 13, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +8; Grp +10; Atk +14 melee (1d6+6/18-20, wrist razor); Full Atk +14/+9 melee (1d6+6/18-20, wrist razor); SA sneak attack +1d6; SQ agent, contact 2/week, evasion, fast talk, integrative bargaining (diplomacy), trapfinding; AL NG; SV Fort +8, Ref +8, Will +8; Str 15, Dex 17, Con 16, Int 15, Wis 16, Cha 18.

Skills and Feats: Appraise +12, Bluff +12, Diplomacy +22, Gather Information +9, Handle Animal +10, Intimidate +15, Knowledge (Warcraft) +11, Listen +11, Profession (Merchant) +16, Ride +10, Sense Motive +11, Spot +10; Dodge, Exotic

Weapon Proficiency (Wrist Razor), Hidden Talent, Psionic Dodge, Trader, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (Wrist Razor), Weapon Specialization (Wrist Razor).

Powers Known (power points 2): 1st – know direction and location.

Possessions: +2 wrist razor, breast plate (ornately carved dune reaper shell), jade necklace (worth 70 sp), 55 sp.

Tarinne Wavir is the granddaughter of Tabaros Wavir, lord of his house. When Tabaros' son Targ died during a raid on a Wavir caravan six years ago, Tarinne became the next most likely candidate to succeed the venerable Wavir patriarch.

Unfortunately for Tarinne, however, Tabaros does not believe that she is ready for the responsibilities of ruling the mighty House Wavir, and he refuses to hand her the reigns of power to any appreciable degree. As a consequence, Tarinne resorts to underhand methods of seeing her will carried out, primarily by concealing information from Tabaros. She enjoys the tacit approval of many Wavir employees in this behavior, as a great number of folk within the house realize that Tabaros' days are numbered and the wily young Tarinne had best be prepared to take his place sooner rather than later.

Tarinne is in excellent physical shape, her muscles toned from years spent on the road battling raiders, pirates and other unsavories in the name of her house. She is charming and intelligent to boot; combined with her natural good looks, her aptitudes lead many to believe that she stands to place House Wavir at the head of the city of Balic when she finally succeeds her grandfather as house matriarch.

Tenpug: Male Mul Gla 5/Arena Champion 2; CR 7; Medium humanoid (dwarf); HD 7d12+21; hp 72; Init +3; Spd 30 ft.; AC 16, touch 13, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +7; Grp +12; Atk +13 melee (1d8+5/x3, iron warhammer); Full Atk +13/+8 melee (1d8+5/x3, iron warhammer) SA -; SQ arena guile +2, armor optimization (studded leather), crowd support +1, mercy, mul traits, reputation, *uncanny dodge*; AL LN;

SV Fort +10, Ref +4, Will +2; Str 20, Dex 17, Con 16, Int 15, Wis 13, Cha 11.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +10, Concentration +7, Craft (weaponsmithing) +14, Intimidate +11, Perform +8, Profession (artisan) +6, Sense Motive +11, Tumble +7; Artisan, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (heartpick), Exotic Weapon Proficiency (wrist razor), Hidden Talent, Improved Feint, Improved Unarmed Strike, Weapon Focus (warhammer).

Psionic Powers Known (power points 2, save DC 10 + power level): 1st - defensive precognition.

Possessions: warhammer (iron), studded carru leather armor, ring of freedom of movement.

Tenpug was a gladiator in the arena of Nibenay, until he lost his left arm and almost his life in a battle. When he healed, he was made an artisan slave and developed a considerable aptitude for the crafting of quality weapons.

During an expedition into the Crescent Forest to gather materials, Tenpug's slave detail was attacked by warriors from Gulg. With their guards dead, the slaves scattered, unsure of what to do with their new-found freedom. An aged dwarf called Old Galth gave Tenpug the idea that the ex-slaves could set themselves up as a tribe of artisans, using the very skills that they had learned as slaves to forge a new life for themselves, far from the cities and their undying lords.

Tenpug led the band into the east, not stopping until they were at the very shores of the Sea of Silt. There they found a temple of the ancients and decided to make it their home, and there the band has remained ever since

Tenpug presents an intimidating appearance to those who do not know him well, his scarred and scowling features belying his gentle heart. In truth, he is a peaceful man who deeply loves the life he has found far from the cities of the Tablelands. He spends as much of his time as he can in silent work, toiling over the crafting of fine weaponry and watching over the band that has become his people.

Toraus: Male Human Tem 8; CR 7; Medium humanoid (human); HD 8d8+16; hp 55; Init +2; Spd 20 ft.; AC 17, touch 12, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +6; Grp +7; Atk +8 melee (1d4+1/x3, masterwork widow's knife); Full Atk +8/+3 melee (1d4+1/x3, masterwork widow's knife); SA -; SQ secular authority; AL LN; SV Fort +8, Ref +4, Will +7; Str 13, Dex 15, Con 14, Int 16, Wis 12, Cha 17.

Skills and Feats: Appraise +11, Bluff +11, Concentration +10, Diplomacy +15, Forgery +11, Gather Information +11, Heal +9, Intimidate +13, Knowledge (religion) +11, Sense Motive +9, Spellcraft +11; Exotic Weapon Proficiency (widow's knife), Hidden Talent, Hidden Talent, Martial Weapon Proficiency (carrikal), Martial Weapon Proficiency (macahuitl), Psionic Talent.

Psionic Powers Known (power points 4, save DC 13 + power level): 1st - *biofeedback*, *prevenom weapon*.

Possessions: masterwork widow's knife, shell armor, sigil, *cognizance crystal* (5 power points), 24 ceramic pieces.

Toraus is a former templar of Dictator Andropinis who took up service with House Rees out of fear of being murdered after the fall of his monarch. Sly and treacherous, he is not above bribery, but has the heart of a coward. Toraus maintains contacts with the secretive cabal of templars led by Asthira, but guards this connection with a fearful intensity.

Toraus is a nervous fellow with short-cropped brown hair, pale blue eyes and an uneasy smile. He was once a well-toned man but the recent years of service with House Rees have added to his girth and doubled his jowls and he is clearly overweight.

Xion: Male Human Tem 5; CR 4; Medium humanoid (human); HD 5d8+10; hp 36; Init +3; Spd 30 ft.; AC 13, touch 9, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +3; Grp +5; Atk +6 melee (1d8+2/19-20, macahuitl); SA -; SQ secular authority; AL CN; SV Fort +6, Ref +0, Will +5; Str 14, Dex 8, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 15.

Skills and Feats: Appraise +3, Bluff +6, Concentration +6, Diplomacy +6, Gather Information +6, Heal +3, Intimidate +6, Knowledge (local) +4, Literacy (common), Sense Motive+4, Spellcraft +3; Improved Initiative, Martial Weapon Proficiency (macahuitl), Martial Weapon Proficiency (warhammer), Quick Draw, Weapon Focus (macahuitl).

Possessions: chitin armor, macahuitl, sigil.

Xion was a middle-rank templar responsible for food rationing, who got to his position through unpredictable behavior and loose alliances with other templars. While few considered the quiet Xion an enemy or a serious threat, he would suddenly strike when least suspected with dire consequences.

However, after Abalach-Re's fall, Xion gave up on his position and struggled to get enough funds to move to another city with his companion Dara-Sin. Xion considered selling her into slavery and eventually he probably would, but for now he was content with her satisfying his lusts.

Having witnessed Grogh-En leave the Consecrated Sepulcher of Badna during the dray invasion, Xion sought to capitalize on this information. He went to the templar Roal, but rather than paying him their agreed upon price for the information, Roal had Xion murdered and his body sent to the Crematorium.

Xion was of average height, but somewhat obese. His life as a templar was a privileged one where food was always plentiful. Xion had no facial hair, including eyebrows, and a scar on his left cheek from a battle in his adolescence.

APPENDIX II: Artifacts

The Star of Badna

The Star of Badna is a perfect sapphire of 200 carats. It is the size of a human fist, the largest gem of its kind ever found on Athas. The gem is most often found embedded in the chest of a badna zombie, a guardian who is cursed with an undead existence by the magic of the sapphire. When exposed to moderate amounts of light, the Star of Badna glows with an azure radiance.

History

After asserting herself as queen of Raam, Abalach-Re proclaimed herself the servant of a greater power (a supreme entity named Badna from which she and her templars drew their power). This was, of course, a fraud, as the being known as Badna has never existed. Hundreds of years ago, Raam had the most plentiful mines on all of Athas, which produced alabaster, sapphires, and emeralds before being mined out several King's Ages ago. The largest gem to be taken from these mines was a sapphire of over 200 carats, and was accredited to be a gift to Raam from Badna by the sorcerer-queen. Called the Star of Badna, it was often displayed to the general populace as a way to dupe Raamites into believing their destiny was controlled by a great celestial entity named Badna and not Abalach-Re.

Nearly 100 years after taking control of Raam, Abalach-Re discovered the intentions of Dregoth to complete his dragon transformation. With Borys of Ebe still rampaging across the Tablelands, none of the other sorcerer-monarchs wanted the Ravager of Giants to attain such power. Hence, Abalach-Re planned to lead the other former Champions to Giustenal and kill Dregoth. Following weeks of seclusion, she empowered the near-perfect Star of Badna with magical wards that protected the bearer from defiler-based spells, as well

as granting other protections and abilities. With the aid of the Star of Badna, Abalach-Re and the other sorcerer-monarchs slew Dregoth with ease.

Afterwards, Abalach-Re discovered that the Star of Badna came with a horrible curse—one the sorcerer-queen was not willing to pay. Unwilling to give up an artifact of such power should she ever need it again, Abalach-Re instead bequeathed the Star of Badna to several high templars over the next 2,000 years (usually those she did not like). This cycle continued until Abalach-Re's death at the hands of Sadira of Tyr in Free Year 10, after which the Star of Badna disappeared. The last known caretaker of the Star of Badna was a human by the name of Grogh-En, who disappeared after the sorcerer-queen's death and the riots that followed.

Campaign Use

Outside of the Dregoth Ascending adventure, the Star of Badna is a deadly artifact for player characters to have. Eventually, they'll fall victim to its curse and become evil **NPCs**. Characters should to hide or attempt to destroy the sapphire before its power falls into the wrong hands.

Abilities

The owner of the Star of Badna has spell resistance 31 against spells cast by defilers and spell resistance 19 against other spells and effects. The star comes with a curse, however: Each month a creature possesses the artifact, it must make a **Will save** (DC 10 + number of previous saves) or become a badna zombie.

The star also grants its owner the following abilities. (A badna zombie can activate one of these abilities each round as a free action.)

- As a standard action, the wielder can use *spell turning* or a targeted *mage's disjunction* (DC 23) on a single creature affecting all its magical items and spells in effect. Each of these abilities can be used twice per day, at caster level 20.

- Once per day as a standard action, the star can project a bluish ray of light at a creature within 60 ft. A target struck by the ray must make a **Will save (DC 23)** or lose his remaining prepared spells and/or spell slots. If the save is successful, the victim still loses half his prepared spells and/or spell slots of each spell level (rounded down). The victim chooses which prepared spells to lose.

Suggested Means of Destruction

- Subjected to a weight of 2,000 pounds, one pound for every years of its existence.
- Sealed in complete darkness for a thousand years.

The Scorcher

The Scorcher was created by Rajaat at the same time as the Silencer of Bodach, and is a massive long sword. The Scorcher is constructed of the same unidentifiable red alloy as the Silencer, and is much harder than enchanted steel. The Scorcher's blade is perfectly smooth, and the hilt contains a red glowing rune identical to that of the Silencer. The hilt is constructed of unbreakable obsidian, wrapped in the hide of an ancient fire drake. The pommel is a tooth from said fire drake, and its point is razor sharp. When used in combat, ebony flames appear from the blade and burn opponents with cold, black fire.

History

When Rajaat planned the Cleansing Wars 4,000 years ago, the great defiler warlord crafted three mighty weapons to be given to his most favored champions. The Silencer was given to the left-hand of Rajaat, a warlord named Irikos, who was later killed after destroying the city of Bodach. The second weapon, a long sword called Scorcher, was given to the right-hand of Rajaat—a warlord named Myron who later became known as Myron the Troll

Scorcher, 4th Champion of Rajaat. And the third was the Scourge, which was given to Borys of Ebe. With the Silencer lost following Irikos' death, Rajaat relied heavily on Myron during his war with the preservers of Athas, and with the help of the Scorchers Rajaat succeeded. Next came the Cleansing Wars.

As the terrible wars against the races of Athas ensued, Myron of Yorum began to question the moral implications of Rajaat's intentions. Perhaps the warlord discovered Rajaat's goal of returning Athas to a Blue Age, and realized that the Champions would also be slain. In the end, Myron's treachery was discovered by Rajaat and he was slain and replaced by Hamanu—who became the new 4th Champion of Rajaat and wielder of the Scorchers.

The Scorchers remained in Hamanu's possession for years, and was the blade used by the sorcerer-monarch of Urik to deal the death-blow to Dregoth, the Ravager of Giants. Shortly after killing the 3rd Champion of Rajaat, Hamanu lost the Scorchers in the Silt Sea near Giustenal. It is believed that the assassins of Dregoth witnessed how easily the Scorchers slew the king of Giustenal, and it was agreed that this weapon of Rajaat could pose a threat to them some day—and was better off lost to all of Athas. All traces of the Scorchers were removed from the land, as the sorcerer-monarchs did not wish their subjects to know of a weapon capable of killing them.

The long sword remained at the bottom of the Sea of Silt for many centuries, until being accidentally swallowed by a silt horror. Later, the horror was killed when it raided the shores of the village of Cromlin and the artifact was retrieved from its gullet by an ex-gladiator named Vorr. With the power of the Scorchers, Vorr slew dozens of slave raiders from Draj, Raam, and Nibenay, before supposedly being killed by a nightmare beast in the Valley of Trevain.

Campaign Uses

The Scorchers is a weapon capable of killing the most powerful of Athas' creatures - a sorcerer-monarch. Unlike the Silencer, the



Illus. by Rev. Ravenscrye Daegmorgam

Scorcher is a more elegant weapon that relies on its vast array of unique abilities to achieve its end. Because of Myron's powerful influence the Scorcher is considered "neutral" in alignment, causing it to be driven by whatever its possessor desires most. If the wielder of the Scorcher is intent on killing innocent villagers, the sword lends its power to the gruesome task. If the wielder wishes the death of a sorcerer-monarch, then the Scorcher wants nothing more than to once again drink the blood of Rajaat's champions.

The attitude of the Scorcher is not one of good or evil, but of purpose. The Scorcher is not a weapon that will ever hang on someone's trophy wall. If the Scorcher is ever without a purpose it is either lost by the wielder, or it summons someone within a 30 mile radius that would have use of its powers in some sort of campaign. This challenger fights the wielder of the sword for its possession, and the Scorcher's powers do not work for the idle possessor.

The Scorcher's whereabouts since Vorr's death are unknown. Rumor has it that the blade can be found in the lair of a nightmare beast that slew Vorr, though this is speculation by the only witness to the incident.

Abilities

When picked up, the Scorcher has the following statistics:

The Scorcher is a **+3 keen icy burst bane longsword**. The bane property is morphic; the wielder chooses an individual, race or organization, for which the weapon deals an extra 2d6 points of damage. The bane property can be changed 1/week as a standard action. The weapon is very light in its wielder's hand, so that the **Weapon Finesse** feat can be used with it. The Scorcher bestows constant **blur** and **protection from evil** and **good** effects on its wielder. It also grants its wielder **fire resistance 15**. Additionally, the wielder of the scorcher can use **slay living 1/week, wall of fire 1/day, true seeing 1/day and cure serious wounds 3/day**, each at caster level 20.

The Scorcher has even greater potential to those who know how to unlock it. If a character focuses on visualizing the completion of his goal and succeeds at a Charisma check (DC 15), the Scorcher has the following statistics:

The Scorcher is a **+6 speed keen icy burst bane longsword**. The bane property is morphic; the wielder chooses an individual, race or organization, for which the weapon deals an extra 2d6 points of damage. The bane property can be changed 1/week as a standard action. The weapon is very light in its wielder's hand, so that the **Weapon Finesse** feat can be used with it. Physical attacks made with the Scorcher ignore all bonuses to AC originating from spells and psionic powers, as well as psionic and magical items. The Scorcher bestows constant **mind blank, blur** and **protection from evil and good** effects on its wielder. It also grants its wielder **fire resistance 30**. Additionally, the wielder of the Scorcher can use **slay living 1/week, wall of fire 1/day, true seeing 1/day and cure serious wounds 3/day**, each at caster level 25.

A side effect of the activated Scorcher is that the wielder develops a compulsion towards completing his goal. The extent is determined by the DM.

Suggested Means of Destruction

- Strike the weapon against the Silencer of Bodach, shattering both blades.
- The blade is consumed by a water drake.

The Pearl of the Sunrise Sea

This artifact appears as a half inch diameter ivory pearl that is perfectly circular. Its surface is absolutely smooth, and it is cool to the touch even during the warmest of Athasian days.

History

The *Pearl of the Sunrise Sea* is from a time when oceans covered the face of Athas and the world was ruled by halfling. Taken from the depths of the ocean now called the Silt

Sea, this item was the possession of one of the nature-masters who help create the Pristine Tower and destroy the encroaching Brown Tide. With the coming of the Rebirth, the pearl was left in the Pristine Tower by the unknown halfling and was discovered there six millennia later by Rajaat the First Sorcerer.

Over the eons the *Pearl* had developed certain abilities due to its proximity to the Pristine Tower, powers the evil pyreen quickly learn and utilized to his benefit. During the height of the Cleansing Wars Rajaat, displeased with Albeorn, Slayer of Elves, gave the Champion the *Pearl of the Sunrise Sea* to protect him from the substantial psionic powers of the elven kings. Soon after the Champions turned on their master and Albeorn, later known as Andropinis, took control of the city-state of Balic. With the *Pearl* on his person, Andropinis later participated in the assassination of Dregoth. When Dregoth's superior psionic powers had no effect on him, Andropinis swore he would study the pearl to learn the extent of its capabilities.

In the years that followed Andropinis uncovered the pearl's powers, and the limitation it imposes for such abilities. In the end the sorcerer-monarch decided the ancient artifact's limitations outweighed its abilities for a being of his power, and he hid the pearl deep within the bowels of his city and told no one of its location – even his most trusted templars. As he was a psionist himself the pearl could be used against him, and this made Andropinis wary of the relic.

Campaign Uses

The *Pearl of the Sunrise Sea* is a potent artifact to be sure, but not one that would have to be restricted to **NPCs**. Should a player character be willing to live with the limitations imposed by the artifact, it can become a powerful weapon. It's important to remember that evil as well as good can possess the *Pearl of the Sunrise Sea*. Should a character become renown through use of this artifact, others may desire its power and seek to kill him for it.

Abilities

- The possessor of the *Pearl of the Sunrise Sea* is completely immune to psionic powers. Though unaffected, the possessor becomes instantly aware of the location and intent of those trying to use psionics against him, regardless of distance. Psionic feats may still be used against the possessor.
- Once per day as a standard action, the *Pearl* can emit a beam of white light at a creature within 60 ft. The target struck by the beam must make a **Will save (DC 23)** or lose all remaining power points. If the save is successful, the victim still loses half his remaining power points.
- Three times per day as a standard action, the possessor of the *Pearl* can detect psionics within a radius of 100 yards. The possessor of the pearl knows the exact location of all beings with a power point reserve within that radius. Additionally he senses all powers being used and the targets of all psionic powers.
- The possessor of the *Pearl of the Sunrise Sea* is deprived of all psionic power while in possession of the artifact. While no psionic powers can affect him, he cannot manifest powers of his own either. Nor can he use psionic feats – though psionic feats may still be used against him.

Suggested Means of Destruction

- Subjected to magical fire for 24 hours.
- Swallowed by a psurlon.

APPENDIX III: New monsters

ZOMBIE, BADNA

The badna zombie is a cursed guardian of the *Star of Badna*, a powerful artifact created by the late sorcerer-queen Abalach-Re. A creature in possession of the *Star of Badna* for 24 hours becomes transformed by the artifact's energy into an undead guardian. There can exist only one badna zombie at a time. Should the *Star of Badna* be taken away, the zombie does everything it can to capture the artifact again. If the zombie cannot recover the *Star of Badna* before the next possessor is affected by the curse, or after a period of one year passes, the previous zombie crumbles to ash.

Once the curse takes hold, the possessor's skin turns a wrinkled light blue in color, matching the hue of the *Star of Badna*. The claws, eyes, and teeth of the zombie become pitch black, though its hair (if any) remains unchanged. The *Star of Badna* embeds itself in the center of the zombie's chest, and it can only be removed if the zombie suffers heavy damage. Though undead, the badna zombie does not rot, preserved by the *Star of Badna*. Should it lose possession of the relic, its body slowly decays until it again regains the artifact. The badna zombie cannot speak, though it understands any languages it knew in life. If the zombie has telepathic psionic powers, it can use those abilities for communication. The *Star of Badna* preserves the zombie's intellect, allowing it to think and reason.

A badna zombie is obsessed with the *Star of Badna*, to the point of having paranoid delusions that everyone is trying to steal the artifact. For this reason, the zombie finds a deserted, remote location where it can feel safe—though even then, the creature suffers from tortured anxiety over having the sapphire taken away. Should the sapphire ever become separated from the zombie, the creature suffers intense pain until it is returned or the zombie perishes. A badna zombie always knows the location of the artifact if separated from it, being able to track it anywhere on Athas.

A badna zombie needs no food or rest, guardianship of the *Star of Badna* being its sole purpose.

Sample Badna Zombie

This example uses a 5th-level human templar / 8th-level servant of Badna as the base creature.

Human Badna Zombie, 5th-Level Templar / 8th-level Servant of Badna

Medium Undead (Augmented Humanoid)

Hit Dice: 13d12 (84 hp)

Initiative: +8

Speed: 50 ft. (10 squares)

Armor Class: 20 (+2 Dex, +4 natural, +1 *studded leather armor*), touch 12, flat-footed 18

Base Attack/Grapple: +9/+14

Attack: Claw +14 melee (3d6+5 plus disease) or masterwork bone short sword +14 melee (1d6+4/19-20)

Full Attack: 2 claws +14 melee (3d6+5 plus disease), or masterwork bone short sword+14/+9 melee (1d6+4/19-20) and claw +9 melee (3d6+2 plus disease)

Space/Reach: 5 ft./5 ft.

Special Attacks: Disease, rebuke undead (+2 on checks), sigil, starchild

Special Qualities: Badna babble +4, damage reduction 10/magic, darkvision 60 ft., fast healing 3, immune to surprise, immunities, riot control, secular authority, skitterish, slippery mind, spell resistance 19 (31 against defiler spells), starfollower, subterfuge, undead traits, vulnerability to pin

Saves: Fort +10, Ref +5, Will +9

Abilities: Str 20, Dex 15, Con —, Int 12, Wis 4, Cha 16

Skills: Bluff +20, Concentration +8, Diplomacy +22, Disguise +15 (+17 acting), Gather Information +10, Heal +5, Intimidate +18, Knowledge (local) +7, Knowledge (religion) +9, Search +1 (+9 tracking *Star of Badna*), Sense Motive +7, Spellcraft +7, Spot -3 (+5 tracking *Star of Badna*), Survival -3 (+5 tracking *Star of Badna*)

Feats: Combat Reflexes, Hostile Mind, Improved Initiative, Improved Natural Attack, Iron Will, Martial Weapon Proficiency (longsword), Martial Weapon Proficiency (short sword), Negotiator

Environment: Raam

Organization: Solitary

Challenge Rating: 15

Treasure: Standard plus the *Star of Badna*

Alignment: Neutral evil

Advancement: By character class

This gaunt humanoid has wrinkled, pale blue skin, and teeth, eyes, and claws of blackest ebony. Embedded in the center of its chest is a gleaming gem – and the creature snarls in jealous rage at your gazing on the bauble.

Combat

In battle, the badna zombie is blindingly fast, striking with surprising speed and accuracy. The influence of the artifact allows it to exercise skill, tactics and stratagems in battle, but these are always dominated by its obsessive need to protect (or retrieve) the *Star of Badna*. As a result, the creature often behaves foolishly or in predictable ways. Still, the badna zombie is aware of its abilities and uses them to its advantage in combat. It can seem an almost unstoppable foe, and it relishes the terror it instills in the service of its curse.

Disease (Ex): Supernatural disease – claw, Fortitude save DC 19 incubation period 1 round; damage 1 point of ability damage to a random ability. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Unlike normal diseases, a badna zombie's disease damages a creature's ability scores each round until cured. For this reason, the disease can never be cured naturally, but a *remove disease* spell works as normal.

Starchild (Su): A badna zombie can use one power of the *Star of Badna* as a free action each round.

Badna Babble (Ex): Even if the legends of Badna are but constructions of Abalach-Re's, Grogh-En uses the teachings to their full advantage. He gains a +4 bonus to Bluff and Intimidate checks.

Immunities (Ex): When in possession of the *Star of Badna*, a badna zombie is immune to holy water and attempts to turn undead.

Immune to Surprise (Ex): The servants of Badna's paranoia eventually results in that they are never caught off-guard. From 8th level, a servant of Badna can always act in the surprise round. However, the servant of Badna loses sanity, reflected in a permanent 2 point Wisdom loss, which cannot be restored, not even by a miracle or wish spell.

Riot Control (Sp): Servants of Badna are used to dealing with riots. When the servant of Badna casts spells with the (Compulsion) descriptor requiring a Will save, such as *calm emotions*, the save DC increases by 2.

Slippery Mind (Ex): This ability functions exactly like the rogue special ability of the same name in the Player's Handbook.

Skitterish (Ex): Servants of Badna are paranoid, expecting ambushes and assaults in any situation. They gain a +2 bonus to initiative. This bonus stacks with the Improved Initiative feat.

Spell Resistance (Ex): When in possession of the *Star of Badna*, the badna zombie gains spell resistance 31 against spells cast by defilers and spell resistance 19 against other spells and effects.

Starfollower (Su): The badna zombie always knows the location of the *Star of Badna* if separated from it, being able to track it anywhere on Athas.

Subterfuge (Sp): Raam is a chaotic city where not even templars feel safe in the streets, thus they have learnt the art of subterfuge. Servants of Badna can alter their appearances as per the disguise self spell once per day, granting a +10 bonus to Disguise checks. The duration of this ability is 10 minutes/class level.

Vulnerability to Pin (Ex): An opponent can tear the *Star of Badna* from a badna zombie's chest by pinning the zombie when it has fewer than 10 hit points. The badna zombie loses the special attacks and special qualities listed above (except for starfollower). If the opponent possesses the artifact for more than one day, it becomes a badna zombie.

Possessions: Masterwork bone short sword, +1 studded leather armor of seeing (Jhakar & Hardwood), *Star of Badna*.

Creating a Badna Zombie

"Badna zombie" is an acquired template that can be added to any living creature (referred to hereafter as the base creature).

A badna zombie uses all of the base creature's statistics and special abilities, except as noted below.

Size and Type: The creature's type changes to undead (augmented version of base creature). Do not recalculate base attack bonus, saves or skill points.

Hit Dice: Increase all future and current Hit Dice to d12s.

Speed: The badna zombie has a base land speed of 50 feet, or the base creature's land speed, whichever is greater.

Armor Class: The base creature's natural armor bonus improves by +4.

Attack: A badna zombie gains a claw attack with each hand. A badna zombie armed with a weapon uses its claw or a weapon, as it desires.

Full Attack: A badna zombie armed with a weapon usually uses the weapon as its primary attack along with a claw as a natural secondary attack, provided it has a free hand.

Damage: Badna zombies have vicious claw attacks that inflict a wasting disease upon those struck. If the base creature does not have claw attacks, use the appropriate damage value from the table below according to its size. Creatures that have other kinds of natural weapons retain their old damage values or use the appropriate value from the table below, whichever is better.

Size	Damage
Fine	1d3
Diminutive	1d4
Tiny	1d6
Small	1d8
Medium	2d6
Large	3d6
Huge	4d6
Gargantuan	6d6
Colossal	8d6

Special Attacks: A badna zombie retains all the base creature's special attacks and gains those described below. Save DCs are equal to 10 + 1/2 badna zombie's HD + badna zombie's Cha modifier unless otherwise noted.

Disease (Su): Supernatural disease—claw, Fortitude save, incubation period 1 round; damage 1 point of ability damage to a random ability.

Unlike normal diseases, a badna zombie's disease damages a creature's ability scores each round until cured. For this reason, the disease can never be cured naturally, but a *remove disease* spell works as normal.

Starchild (Su): A badna zombie can use one power of the *Star of Badna* as a free action each round.

Special Qualities: A badna zombie retains all the base creature's special qualities and gains those described below.

Damage Reduction (Ex): A badna zombie has damage reduction 10/magic. A badna zombie's natural weapons are treated as magic weapons for the purpose of overcoming damage reduction.

Fast Healing (Ex): A badna zombie has fast healing 3.

Immunities (Ex): When in possession of the *Star of Badna*, a badna zombie is immune to holy water and attempts to turn undead.

Spell Resistance (Ex): When in possession of the *Star of Badna*, the badna zombie gains spell resistance 31 against spells cast by defilers and spell resistance 19 against other spells and effects.

Starfollower (Su): The badna zombie always knows the location of the *Star of Badna* if separated from it, being able to track it anywhere on Athas.

Vulnerability to Pin (Ex): An opponent can tear the *Star of Badna* from a badna zombie's chest by pinning the zombie when it has fewer than 10 hit points. The badna zombie loses the special attacks and special qualities listed above (except for starfollower), and its Challenge Rating decreases by 2. If the opponent possesses the artifact for more than one day, it becomes a badna zombie.

Abilities: Increase from the base creature as follows: Str +4, Dex +2, Wis -4. As an undead creature, a badna zombie has no **Constitution** score.

Skills: A badna zombie receives a +8 racial bonus on **Search**, **Spot** and **Survival** checks when hunting the *Star of Badna*, due to its obsession with the location of its prized artifact. Otherwise same as the base creature.

Environment: Raam (or wherever the *Star of Badna* is currently located).

Organization: Solitary.

Challenge Rating: Same as base creature +2 (+0 without the *Star of Badna*).

Treasure: As base creature, plus the *Star of Badna*.

Alignment: Always neutral evil.

Advancement: By character class.

Level Adjustment: Same as the base creature +5.

SO-UT (ATHASIAN RAMPAGER)

Large Magical Beast

Hit Dice: 14d10+84 (161 hp)

Initiative: +3

Speed: 50 ft. (10 squares)

Armor Class: 24 (-1 size, +3 Dex, +12 natural), touch 12, flat-footed 21

Base Attack/Grapple: +14/+25

Attack: Claw +20 melee (2d6+7 plus 1d6 acid)

Full Attack: 2 claws +20 melee (2d6+7 plus 1d6 acid) and bite +15 melee (2d8+3 plus armor damage)

Space/Reach: 10 ft./5 ft.

Special Attacks: Acid, armor damage, fear aura

Special Qualities: Darkvision 60 ft., DR 15/metal, lowlight vision, metalsense 60', power resistance 30, scent, spell resistance 16

Saves: Fort +15, Ref +12, Will +4

Abilities: Str 25, Dex 16, Con 22, Int 3, Wis 11, Cha 10

Skills: Hide +8*, Spot +7, Survival +5

Feats: Ability Focus (acid), Diehard, Endurance, Improved Sunder, Power Attack

Environment: Any land

Organization: Solitary

Challenge Rating: 13

Treasure: None

Alignment: Usually chaotic evil

Advancement: 15-28 HD (Huge); 29-42 HD (Gargantuan)

Level Adjustment: -

It rears up from behind the dune, a heavily scaled, gray hexaped with slavering jaws and an unthinking rage in its blazing bestial eyes. Its twin foreclaws bristle with talons the size of daggers and its four rear limbs sport heavy pads that thump solidly into the sand as it comes lumbering down the slope.

A so-ut, also referred to as an athasian rampager, is a fierce carnivore known for its unreasoning hatred of all manufactured items, especially those crafted from metal. It is surmised that the smell of such objects enrages so-uts. Lone creatures, they sleep during the day and emerge at dusk to hunt for prey.

A so-ut is covered in extremely thick scales, the coloration and texture of which assist it in camouflaging itself during daylight hours. It has eyes that glow a feral red and a vestigial horn on its nose. Although it has very poor hearing, a so-ut possesses an acute sense of smell. A so-ut is fifteen feet long and weighs four tons.

Combat

Although so-uts are meat-eaters, they usually attack intelligent creatures in order to destroy the manufactured items that these creatures are carrying. A so-ut always attacks the largest manufactured object present, even if this object is something like a caravan or a building. It attempts to destroy items made from metal in preference to all else. Only when all such items have been destroyed will it turn its attention to living beings. Should it lose more than half its **hit points** in the process of destroying manufactured items, it will, however, take the time to attack and kill whomever is damaging it, before continuing with its destructive rampage.

A so-ut always opens an attack with a charge, often striking fear into the hearts of its targets in the process. A so-ut attacks primarily with its claws, which secrete a corrosive acid that aids the creature in decimating the objects of its ire. It also possesses a crushing bite that can punch clear through the toughest armors.

Acid (Ex): A so-ut's acid not only deals extra damage on successful claw attacks, it also dissolves an opponent's armor and clothing, making those items useless immediately unless they succeed at **Reflex saves** (DC 25). The **save DC** is **Constitution**-based

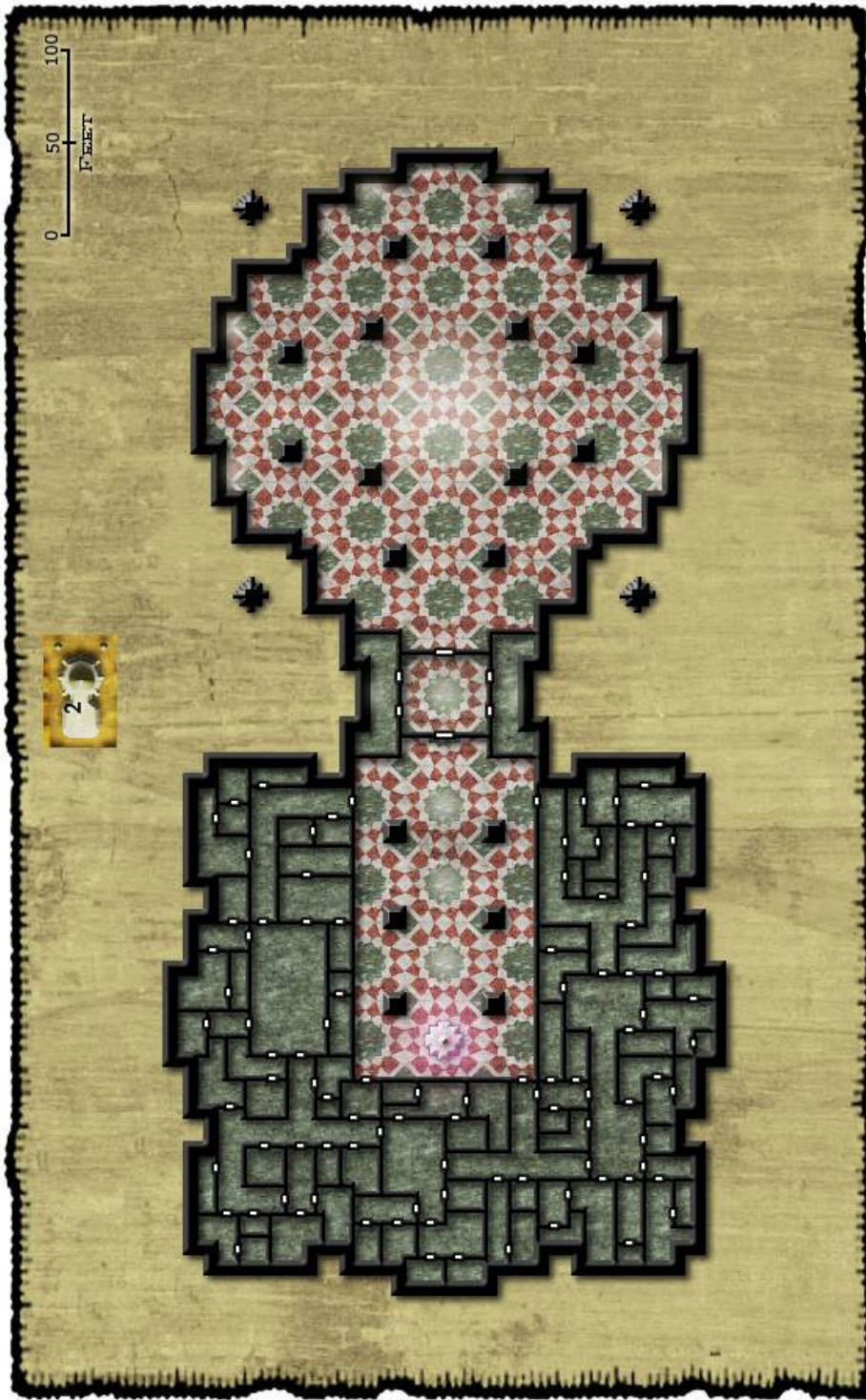
Armor Damage (Ex): If a so-ut hits with its bite attack, it tears at any armor worn by its foe, dealing **4d8+6** points of damage to the opponent's armor. Creatures not wearing armor are unaffected by this special attack. Armor reduced to **0 hit points** is destroyed. Damaged armor may be repaired with a successful **Craft (armorsmithing)** check.

Fear Aura (Ex): When a so-ut charges, all creatures with less than **9 HD** that are within 100 feet of the so-ut when it begins the charge must make a **Will save** (DC 17) or become **frightened** for **2d8 rounds**. Thri-kreen possess an ingrained racial immunity to this fear aura and are never affected. The **save DC** is **Charisma**-based.

Metalsense (Ex): A so-ut's sense of smell is especially sensitive to the presence of metal. A so-ut can detect the presence of any item made from metal within a 60-foot radius.

Skills: *A so-ut receives a +4 **racial bonus** to all **Hide** checks, due to its dun-colored scales.

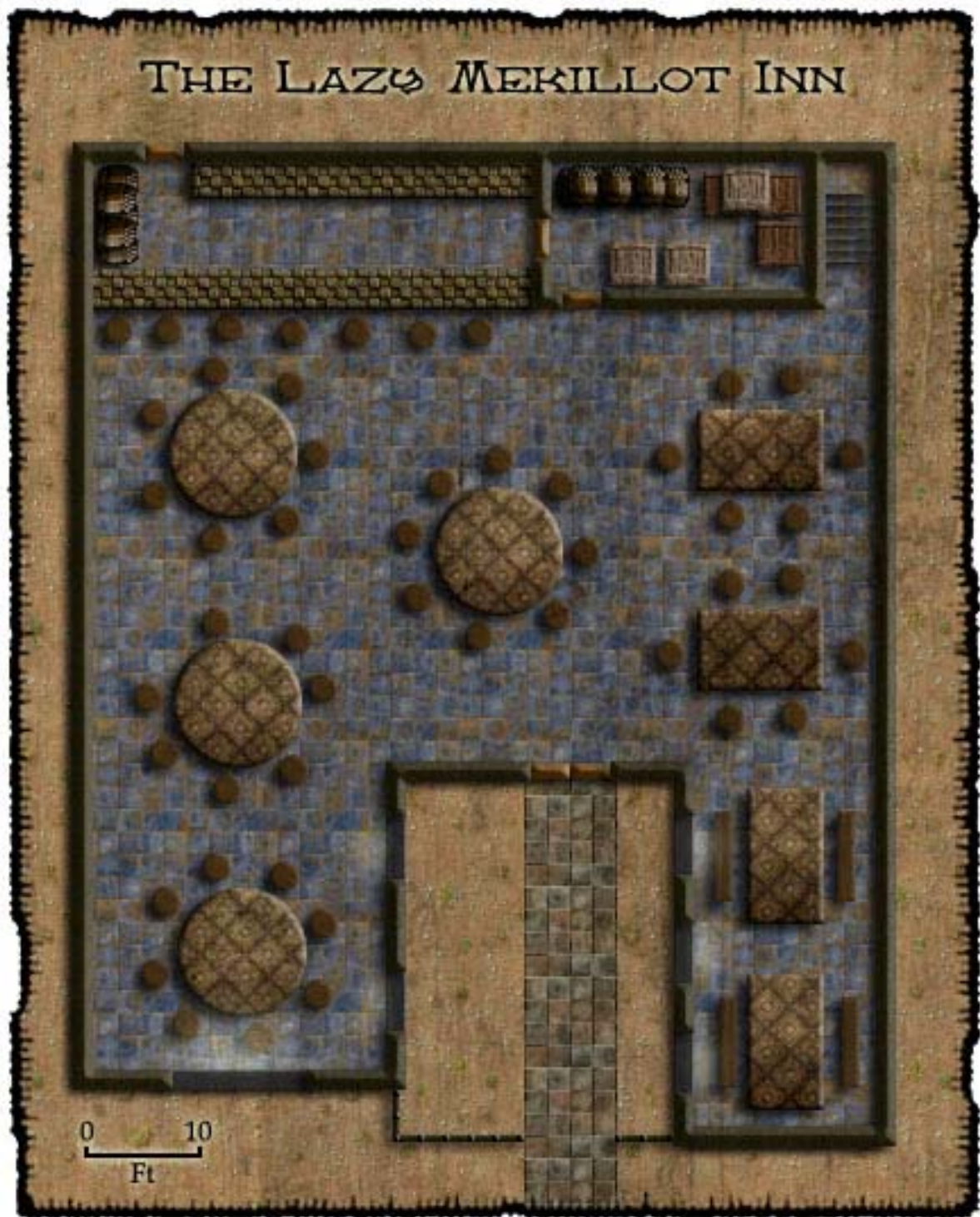
APPENDIX IV: Maps



Map 1: Sepulcher of Badna



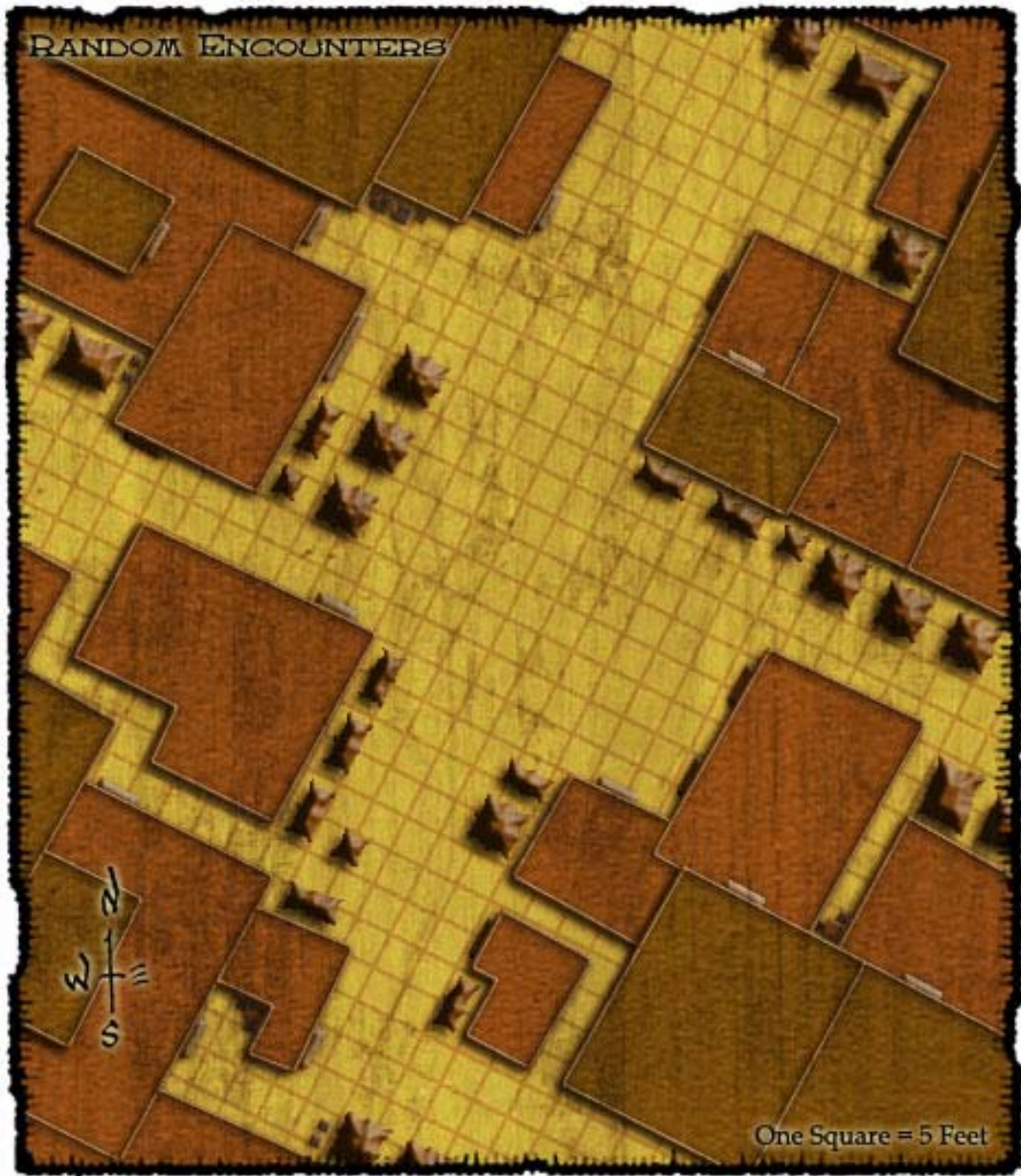
Map 2: Cromlin



Map 3: The Lazy Mekillot Inn



Map 4: The Dirty Lizard Inn



Map 5: Random Encounters

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